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THE

# Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS

IN FREEDOM AND CAPTIVITY.

EDITED BY

HUBERT D. ASTLEY, M.A., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

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## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

**For 1912-13.**

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The past year has brought about important changes in the Executive caused by the retirement of Mr. J. LEWIS BONHOTE from the joint office of Treasurer and Editor. The Editorship has been kindly undertaken by Mr. H. D. ASTLEY and the Treasurership by Mr. B. THOMASSET.

The Council wishes to take this opportunity of recording its appreciative recognition of Mr. BONHOTE's services to the Society. He has always taken an active interest in its welfare; and his tenure of the two posts above-mentioned was marked by an improvement in the financial status of the Society and in the quality of its Magazine. He also acted as editor of the volume on "Practical Bird Keeping" published this year by the Society.

The Council is also desirous of expressing its indebtedness to Mr. P. W. FARMBOROUGH, chartered accountant, who, in the capacity of Auditor to the Society, entered thoroughly into the business relations of the Society with its publishers and made several useful and practical suggestions concerning the administration of the Society on a more secure footing, legal and financial.

It will be evident to all members of the Society that the zeal and energy displayed by Mr. ASTLEY as Editor has improved, and added interest to, the Magazine. This, with other factors, has led to a marked increase in the number of members and has placed the Society in a more flourishing position than it has ever previously occupied.

*Signed for the Council.*

R. I. POCOCK,

*Hon. Business Secretary.*

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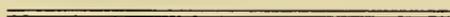
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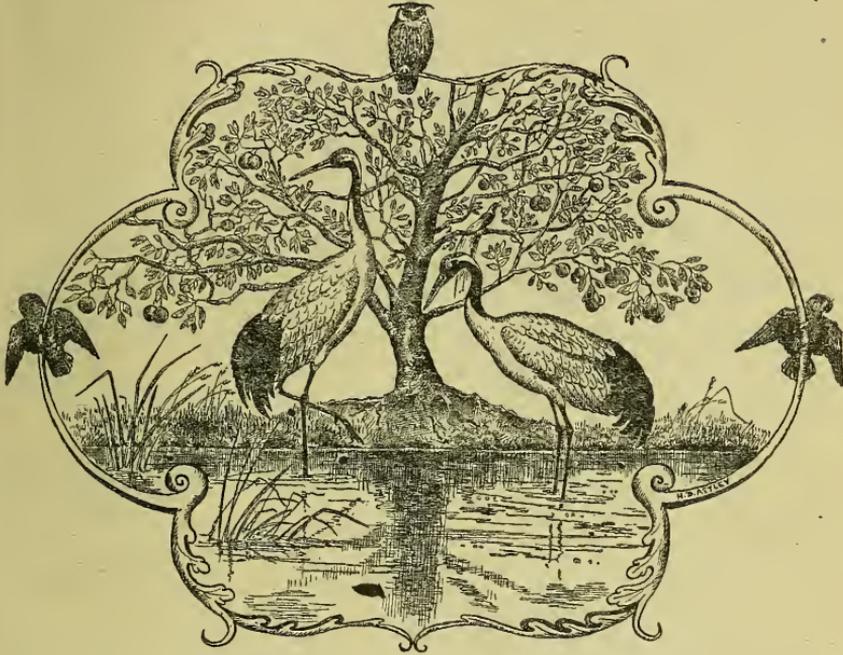
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Edited by J. LEWIS BONHOTE, M.A., F.L.S.



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# List of Members.

*Corrected to October 26th, 1912.*

*NOTICE.*—Members are particularly requested to inform the Hon. Secretary of any error in the spelling of their names, addresses, or descriptions, so that it may be corrected.

The date following the Member's name is the date of his election. "Orig. Mem." signifies that the Member joined the Society on its formation in October 1894. The asterisk denotes that the Member belonged to the U. K. Foreign Cage Bird Society, either at the time of the amalgamation or at some time before.

- ABRAHAM, Miss BEATRICE; Grove Lodge, Muswell Hill, N. (Feb. 1911).
- AINLEY, JOHN WILLIAM; 16, Dalton Green, Dalton, Huddersfield. (June, 1895).
- ALDERSON, Miss R.; Park House, Worksop, Notts. (April, 1896).
- ALSTON, GAVIN; Yondercroft, Darvel, Ayrshire. (June, 1900).
- AMSLER, Dr. MAURICE; 39, High Street, Eton, Windsor. (Dec., 1908).
- ANDREWS, FRANK F.; 2, Attwell Villas, 20, Lower Common South, Putney, S.W. (Jan., 1907).
- ANNINGSON, Mrs.; Walt-ham-Sal, Barton Road, Cambridge. (May, 1899).
- ANSELL, Mrs. G. K.; C.O's Quarters, 5th Dragoon Guards, Ponsonby Barracks, The Curragh, Ireland. (1912).
- ARTHUR, CHARLES P.; Market Place, Melksham, Wilts. (Jan., 1895).\*
- 10 ASTLEY, HUBERT DELAVAL, M.A., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Benham-Valence, Speen, Newbury. (June, 1895) \*
- ASTLEY, REGINALD B.; Acton Reynold, Shrewsbury. (July, 1902).
- ATHERLEY, Mrs.; Eastnor Castle, Ledbury, Herefordshire. (April, 1903).
- ATTEWELL, HAROLD E.; "Cassia Grove," Kingston, Jamaica. (July, 1903).
- BAHR, PHILIP H., B.A., M.B.O.U.; Perrysfield House, Oxted, Surrey. (Nov., 1907).
- BAILY, W. SHORE; Boyers House, Westbury, Wilts. (Feb., 1910).
- BAIRD, Sir ALEXANDER, Bart; Urie, Stonehaven, Kincardine, N.B. (Oct., 1904).
- BAKER, E. C. STUART, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; 6, Harold Road, Upper Norwood, S.E. (Feb., 1904).
- BAKER, Dr. F. D., Superintendent, Nat. Zoological Park, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
- BAKER, JOHN C., M.B., B.A., M.B.O.U.; Ceely House, Aylesbury. (June, 1903).
- 20 BALDELLI, La Contessa TOMMASI; 4, Via Silvio Pellico, Florence, Italy. (April, 1902).

- BAMFORD, WILLIAM; The Coppice, Werneth, Oldham, (March, 1904).
- BAMPFYLDE, The Hon. Mrs.; Court Hall, North Molton, N. Devon. (Oct., 1910).
- BARBER STARKEY, F. W. G.; (*no permanent address*). (June, 1906).
- BARCLAY-WATSON, Miss F.; The Court House, Goring, Sussex. (July, 1902).
- BARLOW, ALFRED; Superintendent, Alexandra Park, Oldham. (April, 1908).
- BEDFORD, The Duchess of, F.Z.S.; Woburn Abbey, Woburn, Beds; and 15, Belgrave Square, S.W. (Feb., 1903).
- BEEBE, C. WILLIAM, Curator of Ornithology; New York Zoological Park, New York City. (July, 1903).
- BENTLEY, DAVID; 80, St. Hubert's Street, Great Harwood, Blackburn. (July, 1895).
- BERESFORD-WEBB, G. M.; Norbryght, South Godstone, Surrey. (May, 1906).
- 30 BERKELEY, The Rev. C. J. ROWLAND; Sibbertoft Vicarage, Market Harborough. (Nov., 1902).
- BERRIDGE, W. S., F.Z.S.; 24, Fortismere Avenue, Muswell Hill, N. Dec., 1909).
- BLAAUW, F. E., C.M.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Gooilust, 'sGraveland, Hilversum, Holland. (Nov., 1901).
- BLAGG, E. W. H.; Greenhill, Cheadle, Staffs. (Sept., 1911).
- BLAINE, G.; Whitedaile, Hambledon, Hants, (Oct., 1908).
- BLAND, F. L.; Rookwood, Copdock, Ipswich. (1912).
- BLATHWAYT, A. P.; The Grange, Northwood, Middlesex. (Jan., 1895).
- BONHOTE, JOHN LEWIS, M.A., F.L.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; (*Editor*); Gadespring Lodge, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. (Dec., 1894).
- BORTHWICK, ALEX.; Vereena, Canonbury Grove, Dulwich Hill, Sydney, N.S.W. (Feb., 1909).
- BOSCAWEN, The Hon. Vere Douglas; 2, St. James's Square, S.W. (Nov., 1910).
- 40 BOUGHTON-LEIGH, HENRY; Brownover Hall, Rugby. (May, 1900).
- BOULENGER, EDWARD G.; 8, Courtfield Road, S. Kensington, S.W. (Oct., 1911).
- BOURKE, Hon. Mrs.; 75, Gloucester Place, Portman Square, W. (Feb., 1911).
- BOX, E. A. GRANVILLE; 76, Broomwood Road, Battersea, S.W. (Nov., 1907).
- BOYD, HAROLD; Box 374, Kelowna, British Columbia. (March, 1902).
- BOYES, FREDERICK; Norwood, Beverley, Yorkshire. (Sept., 1907).
- BRAMPTON, Miss E.; 31, Church Crescent, Church End, Finchley, N. (Feb., 1898).
- BRIDGEMAN, Lieut. and Commr. The Hon. RICHARD, O.B., R.N., M.B.O.U.; H.M.S. "Druid," 1st Destroyer Flotilla, Home Fleet. (Dec., 1904).
- BRIDGEMAN, Colonel The Hon. FRANCIS C.; Neachley, Shifnal. (Oct., 1905).

- BROOK, E. J., Hoddam Castle, Ecclefechan, N.B. (August, 1905).
- 50 BROWNING, WILLIAM H.; 18, West 54th Street, New York City. (March, 1906).
- BURGOYNE, F., F.Z.S., 116, Harley Street, W. (1912).
- BURTON, WALTER; Mooresfoot, East Sheen, Mortlake, S.W. (Dec., 1901).
- BUTLER, ARTHUR G., Ph.D., F.L.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. (*Hon. Correspondence Secretary*); 124, Beckenham Road, Beckenham, Kent. (Orig. Mem.) \*
- BUTLER, A. L., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Superintendent of Game Preservation, Khartoum, Soudan. (Aug., 1906).
- BUTLER, ARTHUR LARCHIN, M. Aust. O. U.; Waimarie, Lower Sandy Bay, Hobart, Tasmania. (July, 1905).
- BÜTTIKOFER, Dr. J., C.M.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Director of the Zoological Gardens, Rotterdam, Holland. (Oct. 1907). (*Hon. Member*).
- BUXTON, E. HUGH; Fritton Hall, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. (June, 1909).
- CAMPBELL, A. C. DRELINCOURT; 48, Rockliffe Road, Bathwick, Bath. (1912).
- CAMPS, H. T. T., F.Z.S.; Linden House, Haddenham, Isle of Ely. (Orig. Mem.)
- 60 CAPERN, F.; Avenue House, Cotham Park, Bristol (March, 1903).
- CARPENTER, The Hon. Mrs.; 22, Grosvenor Road, S.W. (Feb., 1898).
- CARPENTER, Prof. G. H., Royal Zoological Society of Ireland, Phoenix Park, Dublin. (Oct., 1905).
- CARRICK, GEORGE; 13, King's Terrace, Maryhill, Glasgow. (March, 1898).
- CASTELLAN, VICTOR E.; Hare Hall, Romford, Essex. (Orig. Mem.)
- CATTLE, C. F.; Thurston, Bury St. Edmunds. (Jan., 1905).
- CECIL, Lady WILLIAM; Baroness Amherst of Hackney; Didlington Hall, Stoke Ferry, Norfolk, and 23, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.
- CHAMBA, H. H., Sir BHURI SINGH, K.C.S.I., Rajah of; Chamba, via Dalhousie, Punjab, India. (Jan., 1908).
- CHAMBERLAIN, WALTER, Pendock Grove, Cobham, Surrey. (1912).
- CHARRINGTON, Mrs. Mowbray; How Green, Hever, Edenbridge, Kent. (May, 1906).
- 70 CHAWNER, Miss; Forest Bank, Lyndhurst, Hants. (July, 1899).
- CLITHEROW, Mrs. CLAUD STRACEY; 20, Park Square, Regent's Park, N.W. (June, 1903).
- COCKELL, NORMAN FORBES; 21, Camac Street, Calcutta, India. (Nov., 1905).
- CONNELL, Mrs. KNATCHBULL; The Orchard, Brockenhurst, Hants. (Nov., 1897).
- CONSTABLE, The Rev. W. J.; Uppingham School, Uppingham. (Sept., 1901).
- COOPER, E. E., Berrydown Court, Overton, Hants. (1912).
- COOPER, JAMES; Cayton, Scarborough. (Orig. Mem.)

- COOPER, WILLIAM; Aislaby Hall, Pickering, Yorks. (March, 1907).  
 CORBET, Lady; Acton Reynold, Shrewsbury. (Oct., 1905).  
 CORBET, Sir ROLAND J., Bart.; Acton Reynold, Shrewsbury. (May, 1911).
- 80 CORY, REGINALD R.; Duffryn, near Cardiff. (August, 1905).  
 COX, Mrs. F. E.; 3a, Bickenhall Mansions, W. (1912).  
 CRAIG, Prof. WALLACE; Orono, Maine, U.S.A. (1912).  
 CROFT, A. B.; The Clock House, Ashford, Middlesex. (May, 1907).  
 CROKSHAW, J.; 193, Manchester Road, Accrington. (Dec., 1894).  
 CROSS, W. SIMPSON, F.Z.S.; 18, Earle Street, Liverpool. (Jan., 1908).  
 CUMMINGS, A.; 16, Promenade Villas, Cheltenham. (Dec., 1896).  
 CUNINGHAM, MARTIN; Goffs Oak House, Waltham Cross. (Oct., 1908).  
 CURREY, Mrs.; The Pit House, Ewell, Surrey. (Feb., 1906).  
 CUSHNY, CHARLES; (*No permanent address*). (June, 1906).
- 90 DAVIES, CLAUDE G., M.B.O.U.; "D" Squadron, Cape Mounted Riflemen, Matatiele, E. Griqualand, S. Africa. (July, 1909).  
 DAWNAY, The Lady ADELAIDE; Brampton House, Northampton. (July, 1903).  
 DELL, CHARLES; 12, High Street, Harlesden, N.W. (July, 1900).  
 DENMAN, ARTHUR, M.A., F.Z.S., F.S.A., 29, Cranley Gardens, South Kensington, S.W. (Sept., 1909).  
 DENNIS, Mrs. H. E.; St. Leonard's Park, Horsham. (March, 1903).  
 DE TAINTEGNIES, La Baronne Le Clément; Cleveland, Minehead, Somerset. (Feb., 1902).  
 DEWAR, D., I.C.S.; c/o Messrs. Grindley & Co., 54, Parliament Street, S.W. (Sept., 1905).  
 DEWINTON, WILLIAM EDWARD, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Southover, Burwash, Sussex. (Aug., 1903).  
 DIRECTOR, THE; Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts. (1912).  
 DONALD, C. H.; c/o The Alliance Bank of Simla, Ltd., Simla, India. (March, 1906).
- 100 DOUGLAS, Miss; Rose Mount, Pitlochry, N.B. (June, 1905).  
 DOUGLAS, WILLIAM C., F.Z.S.; 9, Trebovir Road, Earl's Court, S.W. (Nov., 1900).  
 DREWITT, FREDERICK DAWTREY, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; 14, Palace Gardens Terrace, Kensington, W. (May, 1903).  
 DRUMMOND, Miss; Mains of Megginch, Errol, N.B. (Feb., 1905).  
 DUFF, The Lady GRANT; Earl Soham Grange, Framlingham, Suffolk. (Aug., 1905).  
 DUNLEATH, The Lady; Ballywalter Park, Ballywalter, co. Down, Ireland. (August, 1897).  
 DUTTON, The Hon. and Rev. Canon; Bibury, Fairford. (Orig. Mem.)  
 DYOTT, R. A.; Freeford, Lichfield. (1912).
- ECKSTEIN, F.; Ottershaw Park, Ottershaw, Surrey. (1912).

- EDWARDS, G.; 377, Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, S.W. (August, 1902).
- 110 EZRA, ALFRED; 110, Mount Street, W. (1912).
- EZRA, DAVID; 3, Kyd Street, Calcutta. (June, 1902).
- FARMBOROUGH, PERCY W., F.Z.S.; Lower Edmonton. (June, 1896).\*
- FARRAR, The Rev. C. D.; Micklefield Vicarage, Leeds. (Jan., 1895).
- FASEY, WILLIAM R.; The Oaks, Holly Bush Hill, Snaresbrook, N.E. (May, 1902).
- FETHERSTONHAUGH, The Hon. Mrs.; Villa Plata, Gibraltar, Spain. (Sept., 1910).
- FIELD, GEORGE; Sorrento, Staplehurst, Kent. (March, 1900).
- FIELD, Miss HILDA; Ashurst Park, Tunbridge Wells. (1912).
- FIREBRACE, Mrs.; 26, Old Queen Street, Westminster, S.W. (Feb., 1911).
- FLOWER, Captain STANLEY SMYTH, F.L.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Director, Egyptian Government Zoological Gardens; Giza, Cairo, Egypt. (Jan., 1903).
- 120 FLOWER, Mrs. STANLEY; Longfield, Tring, Herts. (March, 1909).
- FOCKLEMANN, HERR AUGUST; Tier Park, Gross-Birstel, Hamburg. (Nov., 1907).
- FOLLETT, The Lady JULIA; Woodside, Old Windsor. (Oct., 1903).
- FORTESCUE, Col. H.; Falmouth House, Newmarket. (Oct., 1908).
- FOSTER, E. HUBERT; Lower Bowden, Pangbourne, Berks. (1912).
- FOSTER, WM. HILL; 164, Portland Street, Southport. (Jan., 1902).
- FOWLER, CHARLES; 26, Broad Street, Blaenavon. (Dec., 1894).
- FROST, WILFRED; 13, Fairlaw Avenue, Chiswick Park, W. (July, 1908).
- GALLOWAY, P. F. M.; Durban, Rectory Road, Caversham, Reading. (March, 1907).
- GHIGI, M. le Prof. Alessandro; Via d'Azeglio, Bologna, Italy. (March, 1911).
- 130 GIBBS, Mrs. H. MARTIN; Barrow Court, Flax Bourton, R.S.O., Somerset. (April, 1904).
- GIBBINS, WILLIAM B.; Ettington, near Stratford-on-Avon. (June, 1895).\*
- GILBEY, Sir WALTER, F.Z.S.; Elsenham Hall, Elsenham, Essex. (Dec., 1907).
- GILES, HENRY M., M. Aust. O. U. (Orig. Mem.); Zoological Gardens, Perth, Western Australia. (June, 1903).
- GILL, ARTHUR, M.R.C.V.S.; Brookside, Sussex Place, Slough, Bucks. (Dec., 1899).
- GLADSTONE, Miss J.; The Lodge, Parkstone, Dorset. (July, 1905).
- GODDARD, H. E.; Rothsay, Thicket Road, Sutton, Surrey. (Feb., 1899).
- GODMAN, F. DUCANE, D.C.L., F.R.S., F.Z.S.; President of the British Ornithologists' Union; 45, Pont Street, S.W. (Oct., 1904). (*Honorary Member*).

- GOODALL, A. A. ; 12, Ildersley Grove, West Dulwich, S.E. (Nov., 1909).
- GOODCHILD, HERBERT, M.B.O.U. ; 66, Gloucester Road, Regent's Park, N.W. (Oct., 1902).
- 140 GOODFELLOW, WALTER, M.B.O.U. ; Mount Fleuri, Southbourne Grove, Bournemouth. (June, 1897).
- GORTER, Madame ; The Delta, Walmer, Kent. (Nov., 1901).
- GOSSE, PHILIP, M.R.C.S. ; Castlemead, Beaulieu, Hants. (April, 1911).
- GOW, J. BARNETT ; 86, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, and Ledcameroch, Bearsden, Glasgow. (Feb., 1906).
- GRABOWSKY, F., Director of the Zoological Gardens ; Breslau, Germany. (June, 1905).
- GRAY, HENRY, M.R.C.V.S. ; 23, Upper Phillimore Place, W. (June, 1906).
- GREENING, LINNÆUS ; Fairlight, Grappenhall, nr. Warrington. (Jan. 1911).
- GREGORY, Mrs. ; Melville, Parkstone, Dorset. (Dec., 1901).
- GRIFFITHS, M. E. ; Caizley House, Temple Road, Stowmarket. (May, 1902).
- GRÖNVOLD, HENIK ; 26, Albert Bridge Road, Battersea Park, S.W. (Nov., 1902).
- 150 GUILFORD, Miss H. ; 23, Lenton Avenue, The Park, Nottingham. (March, 1903).
- GULDENKIAN, C. S. ; 38, Hyde Park Gardens, London, W. (Dec., 1908).
- GUNN, W. CECIL ; The Red House, Bickley, Kent. (Jan., 1910).
- GUNNING, Dr. J. W. B., F.Z.S., Director of the Transvaal Museum and Zoological Gardens ; Pretoria, South Africa. (Sept., 1906).
- GÜNTHER, ALBERT, M.A., M.D., Ph.D., F.R.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. ; 2, Lichfield Road, Kew Gardens. (Sept., 1902). (*Honorary Member*).
- GURNEY, JOHN HENRY, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. ; Keswick Hall, Norwich ; and Athenæum Club, Pall Mall, S.W. (Dec., 1904).
- HAAGNER, A. K., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, South Africa. (Nov., 1905).
- HALKED, Lieut. N. G. B. ; King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry ; 3rd Battalion, Egyptian Army, Khartoum. (Dec., 1908).
- HAMILTON, Miss ; 2, Upper Wimpole Street, W. (April, 1902).
- HARDING, W. A., M.A., F.Z.S., ; Histon Manor, Cambridge. (Dec. 1903).
- 160 HARDY, LAWRENCE, M.P. ; Sandling Park, Hythe, Kent. (Nov., 1906).
- HAREWOOD, The Countess of ; Harewood House, Leeds. (March, 1903).
- HARLEY, Mrs. F. ; Brampton Bryan, Herefordshire. (1908).
- HARPER, Miss ; 6, Ashburnham Road, Bedford. (March, 1902).
- HARPER, EDWARD WILLIAM, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. ; Government Road, Nairobi, British East Africa. (Feb., 1901).
- HARTLEY, Mrs. ; St. Helen's Lodge, Hastings. (April, 1897).
- HARVEY, The Hon. Lady ; Langley Park, Slough. (Oct., 1906).
- HAWKE, The Hon. MARY C. ; Wighill Park, Tadcaster. (Nov., 1900).
- HAWKINS, L. W. ; 206, Clive Road, West Dulwich, S.E. (Jan., 1899).

- HAZELRIGG, Sir ARTHUR; Noseley Hall, Leicester. (March, 1907).
- 170 HEMSWORTH, The Rev. B., M.A., J.P.; Monk Fryston Hall, South Milford, Yorks. (June, 1901).
- HETLEY, Mrs. HENRY; Beaufort House, 114, Church Road, Norwood, S.E. (July, 1910).
- HEWITT, H. C.; East Sooke, Vancouver Island, B.C. (Jan., 1905).
- HEYWOOD, RICHARD; Narborough, Norfolk. (Oct., 1911).
- HILL, Mrs. E. STAVELEY; Oxley Manor, Wolverhampton. (Oct., 1905).
- HINCKS, Miss E. MARJORIE; Barons Down, Dulverton. (Feb., 1908).
- HINDLE, R. FRANKLIN; 34, Brunswick Road, Liverpool. (Sept., 1898).
- HODGSON, The Hon. Mrs.; Clopton, Stratford-on-Avon. (March, 1903).
- HOLDEN, RALPH A., F.Z.S.; 5, John Street, Bedford Row, London. (May, 1906).
- HOLLINS, BERNARD; 9, George Street, Hull. (Sept., 1910).
- 180 HOPKINSON, Dr. EMILIUS; D.S.O., M.A., M.B. Oxon., 45, Sussex Square, Brighton. (Oct., 1906).
- HOPSON, FRED C.; Northbrook Street, Newbury. (March, 1897).
- HORSBRUGH, Major BOYD R., A.S.C.; 11, Pembroke Square, Kensington, W. (Jan., 1898).
- HOUSDEN, JAMES B.; Brooklyn, Cator Road, Sydenham, S.E. (Orig. Mem.)
- HOWARD, ROBERT JAMES, M.B.O.U.; Shear Bank, Blackburn. (April, 1903).
- HOWARD-VYSE, H.; Stoke Place, Slough. (Nov., 1906).
- HOWMAN, Miss; 6, Essex Grove, Upper Norwood. (March, 1897).
- HUBBARD, GEORGE; 112, Fenchurch Street, E.C. (Jan., 1905).
- HUGHES, Lady; Shelsley Grange, Worcester. (Nov., 1904).
- HUMPHREYS, RUSSELL; Bryn Court, Woldingham, Surrey. (April, 1896).
- 190 HUSBAND, Miss; Clifton View, York. (Feb., 1896).
- HUTCHINSON, Miss ALICE; Alderton Vicarage, Chippenham, Wilts. (August, 1907).
- INCHQUIN, The Lady; Dromoland Castle, Newmarket-on-Fergus, County Clare, Ireland. (Nov., 1897).
- INGRAM, COLLINGWOOD; The Bungalow, Westgate-on-Sea. (Oct., 1905).
- INGRAM, Sir WILLIAM, Bart; 65, Cromwell Road, London, S.W. (Sept. 1904).
- ISAAC, CHARLES; Somerton, Bath Road, Slough. (March, 1906).
- IVENS, Miss; 13, Rua da Piedada, Campo D'Ourique, Lisbon, Portugal. (August, 1903).
- JAMESON, Major FRANK; Melrose House, Wilbury Road, Hove, Sussex. (1912).
- JARDINE, Miss EMILY; The Ladies' Hostel, Kimberley, S. Africa. (Jan., 1903).
- JOHNSON, Major FRANK; Melvore House, Wilbury Road, Hove. (1912).
- 200 JOHNSTONE, Mrs. E. J.; Burrswood, Groombridge, Sussex. (May, 1900).

- KENNEDY, Lieut. G.; (*No permanent address*). (1911).
- KIRCHNER, Mrs.; Sea Copse Hill, Wootton, Isle of Wight. (Jan., 1911).
- KLOSS, C. BODEN; (*No permanent address*). (1912).
- KUSER, ANTHONY R.; P.O. Box 590, Newark, New Jersey, U.S.A. (Dec., 1908).
- KUSER, J. DRYDEN; Faircourt, Bernardsville, New Jersey, U.S.A. (1912).
- LANCASTER, JOHN; Dunchurch Lodge, near Rugby. (March, 1904).
- LASCELLES, The Hon. GERALD, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; The King's House, Lyndhurst. (Oct., 1896).
- LATHOM, H. W.; King Street Chambers, King Street, Luton. (1912).
- LAWSON, Mrs. F. W.; Adel, Leeds. (Nov., 1903).
- 110 LEE, Mrs. E. D.; Hartwell House, Aylesbury. (July, 1906).
- LEEKE, Miss DOROTHY; 9, Hertford Street, Mayfair, W. (May, 1909).
- LEIGH, CECIL; Lyburn Park, near Lyndhurst, Hants. (Nov., 1906).
- LE SOUEF, Dudley; Zoological Gardens, Royal Park, Parkville, Melbourne, Australia. (1912).
- LEWIS, W. JARRETT; Corstorphine, Ryde, I. of W. (Oct., 1904).
- LILFORD, The Lady; Lilford Hall, Oundle, Northamptonshire. (Jan., 1898).
- LLOYD, Lieut. A. M.; 1/24th Regiment, Chatham Barracks, Chatham. (April, 1911).
- LOCKYER, ALFRED; St. Monica's Lodge, Elm Park Road, Winchmore Hill, N. (Dec., 1905).
- LONG, Mrs.; Sherrington Manor, Berwick, Sussex. (Feb., 1907).
- LOVELACE, The Countess of; Wentworth House, Chelsea Embankment, London, S.W. (May, 1906).
- 220 LYON, Miss K.; Harewood, Horsham. (Nov., 1894).
- MCGEAGH, Dr. R. T.; 23, Breeze Hill, Bootle, Laucs. (Aug., 1908).
- MCGEE, The Rev. Father; Keppel Street, Bathurst, N.S.W. (July, 1908).
- MALONE, Mrs. M. L'ESTRANGE, The Manor Cottage, Clewer Green, Windsor. (Jan., 1902).
- MANNERS-SMITH, Lieut.-Col.; The Residency, Nepal, India. (1911).
- MAPPIN, STANLEY; 12, Albert Hall Mansions, Kensington Gate, S.W. (April, 1911).
- MARSHALL, ARCHIBALD MCLEAN; Chitcombe, Brede, Sussex. (Jan., 1906).
- MARTIN, H. C.; 147, Victoria Road, Old Charlton, Kent; and Saladero, Liebig, Fray Bentos, Uruguay. (Jan., 1897).
- MARTIN, H. J.; Clock House Farm, Woodmausterne, Surrey. (June, 1911).
- MARTORELLI, Dr. GIANCINTO, M.B.O.U., etc.; Collezione, Turati, Museo Civico di Storia Naturale, Milan, Italy. (July, 1906). (*Honorary Member*).
- 230 MATHEWS, GREGORY M., F.R.S., Edin., F.L.S.; Langley Mount, Watford, Herts. (Dec., 1909).

- MEADE-WALDO, E. G. B., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Stonewall Park, Eden-bridge, Kent. (Jan., 1895).
- MILLER, TUNNISWOOD; 27, Belgrave Road, S.W. (March, 1905).
- MILLS, The Hon. VIOLET; Wilderness, Sevenoaks. (Oct., 1907).
- MILLSUM, O.; Everburg, Brabant, Belgium. (Aug., 1909).
- MITCHELL, HARRY; Holmefield, Lyndhurst, Hants. (Feb. 1904).
- MOERSCHELL, F.; Imperial Hotel, Malvern. (June, 1895).
- MOMBER, Mrs.; 77, Harley Street, W. (Sept., 1907).
- MONTAGU, Hon. E. S., M.P., M.B.O.U.; 59, Bridge Street, Cambridge, and 12, Kensington Palace Gardens, W. (May, 1905).
- MOORE, WM. FAWCETT; (*No permanent address*). (Aug., 1903).
- 240 MORGAN, EVAN F.; 37, Bryanston Square, W. (1912).
- MORRISON, Hon. Mrs. McLAREN; Parkfield, Park Lane, Southwick, Sussex. (Sept. 1911).
- MORSHEAD, Lady; Forest Lodge, Binfield, Bracknell, Berks. (Dec., 1894).\*
- MORTIMER, Mrs.; Wigmore, Holmwood, Surrey. (Orig. Mem.)\*
- MUNDY, Miss SYBIL MILLER; Shipley Hall, Derby. (Jan., 1909).
- MUNT, HENRY; 10, Ashburn Place, S. Kensington, S.W. (1912).
- MYLAN, JAS. GEORGE, B.A., M.B. (Univ. Col.); L.R.C.P. and L.R.C.S., (Ed.) &c., 90, Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield. (Dec., 1901).
- NEWALL, Mrs.; Red Heath, Croxley Green, R.S.O., Herts. (June, 1911).
- NEWMAN, T. H., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Newlands, Harrowdene Road, Wembley, Middlesex. (May, 1900).
- NICHOLS, WALTER B., M.B.O.U.; Stour Lodge, Bradfield, Manningtree. (Jan., 1907).
- 250 NICOLL, MICHAEL J., M.B.O.U.; Zoological Gardens, Giza, Cairo, Egypt. (July, 1906).
- NOBLE, Mrs.; Park Place, Henley-on-Thames. (Oct., 1900).
- OAKLEY, W.; 34, High Street, Leicester. (March, 1896).\*
- OATES, F. W.; White House Farm, New Leeds, Leeds. (Oct., 1897).
- OBERHOLSER, HARRY C.; 1445, Girard Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., United States of America. (Oct., 1903).
- OGILVIE-GRANT, W. R., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Cromwell Road, S.W. (Dec., 1903).
- OGLE, BERTRAM SAVILLE, M.B.O.U.; Steeple Aston, Oxford. (Dec., 1902).
- OLIPHANT, TREVOR; Bale Rectory, Melton Constable, Norfolk. (May, 1908).
- ONslow, The Countess of; Clandon Park, Guildford, Surrey. (July, 1910).
- 260 O'REILLY, NICHOLAS S.; 144, Eastern Road, Kemp Town, Brighton. (Dec., 1894).
- OSTREHAN, J. ELIOTT D.; Bank House, Thame, Oxon. (April, 1903).

- PAGE, WESLEY T., F.Z.S.; Glenfield, Graham Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey. (May, 1897).
- PAINTER, K. V.; 2508, Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. (Dec., 1909).
- PALMER, Mrs. G. W.; Marlston House, near Newbury. (Oct., 1905).
- PAM, ALBERT, F.Z.S.; Malting Farm, Little Hallingbury, Bishop's Stortford. (Jan., 1906).
- PAM, HUGO, C.M.Z.S.; 65, Bishopsgate, E.C. (Sept., 1911).
- PARKER, DUNCAN, J.P.; Clopton Hall, Woolpit, Bury St. Edmunds. (June, 1903).
- PARKIN, THOMAS, M.A., F.R.G.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Fairseat, High Wickham, Hastings. (Oct., 1903).
- PAUWELS, R.; Everberg, par Cortenberg, Brabant, Belgium. (Dec., 1904).
- 270 PEGG, S. ARTHUR; c/o Messrs. S. Pegg & Son, Alexandra Street, Leicester. (1912).
- PEIR, P.; c/o W. G. PEIR, Esq., 60, Elizabeth Street, Sydney, N. S. Wales. (July, 1903).
- PENNANT, Lady EDITH DOUGLAS; Soham House, Newmarket, Cambs. (Sept., 1908).
- PENROSE, FRANK G., M.D., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; c/o Mr. R. H. Porter, 7, Princes Street, Cavendish Square, W. (Dec., 1903).
- PERRÉAU, Capt. G. A.; 2/4 Gurkha Rifles, Bakloh, Punjab, India. (Dec. 1903).
- PERRING, C. S. R.; 1, Walpole Road, Twickenham. (Sept., 1895).
- PHILLIPPS, REGINALD; 26, Cromwell Grove, West Kensington Park, W. (Orig. Mem.) \*
- PHILLIPS, JOHN C.; Knobfields, Wenham, Mass., U.S.A. (March, 1910).
- PHILLIPS, Mrs. E. LORT, F.Z.S.; 79, Cadogan Square, S.W. (April, 1907).
- PICARD, HUGH K.; 298, West End Lane, N.W. (March, 1902).
- 280 PICHOT, Mons. PIERRE AMÉDÉE; 132, Boulevard Hausmann, Paris. (Sept., 1910).
- PICKFORD, RANDOLPH JOHN; Thorn Lea, Carmel Road, Darlington.
- POCOCK, R. I., F.R.S., F.L.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Zoological Society's Gardens, Regent's Park, N.W. (Feb., 1904). (*Hon. Secretary*).
- POWIS, The Earl of; 45, Berkeley Square, W.; and Powis Castle, Welshpool. (April, 1902).
- PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, LIBRARY OF; Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.A. (Nov., 1907).
- PYCRAFT, W. P., A.J.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., &c.; British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Cromwell Road, S.W. (Nov., 1904).
- RADCLIFFE, Captain A. DELMÉ; 105th Maratha Light Infantry, Poona, India.
- RATHBORNE, HENRY B.; Dunsinea, Castleknock, co. Dublin. (May, 1901).
- RATTIGAN, G. E.; Lanarkslea, Cornwall Gardens, S.W. (Aug., 1908).
- RAVEN, W. H.; 239, Derby Road, Nottingham. (Dec., 1909).

- 290 REID, MRS.; Funchal, Madeira. (Feb., 1895).  
 RENSHAW, Dr. GRAHAM, M.B., M.R.C.S.; Bridge House, Sale, Manchester. (Jan., 1910).  
 RICE, Captain G.; Persey House, Blairgowrie, N.B. (May, 1912).  
 RILEY, JOSEPH H.; U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C., U.S.A. (June, 1906).  
 RITCHIE, NORMAN; The Holmes, St. Boswell's, N.B. (Feb., 1903).  
 ROBBINS, HENRY; (*Address unknown*). (April, 1908).  
 ROBERT, Madam; Hartland House, Sutton, Surrey. (June, 1906).  
 ROBERTS, Mrs., C.M.Z.S., M. Aust. O.U.; Beaumaris, Montpelier Street, Hobart, Tasmania. (June, 1903).  
 ROBERTS, Mrs. NORMAN; 8, Holbeck Hill, Scarborough. (Nov., 1907).  
 ROGERS, Lt.-Col. J. M., D.S.O., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. (Late Royal Dragoons); Riverhill, Sevenoaks. (April, 1907).  
 300 ROGERSON, A.; Fleurville, Ashford Road, Cheltenham. (Dec., 1902).  
 ROTCH, Mrs.; Park House, Park Road, Teddington. (June, 1897).  
 ROTHWELL, JAMES E.; 153, Sewall Avenue, Brookline, Mass., U.S.A. (Oct., 1910).
- ST. QUINTIN, WILLIAM HERBERT, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Scampston Hall, Rillington, York. (Orig. Mem.)  
 SAVAGE, A.; 16, Rue Gibert, Rouen, Seine Inférieure, France. (April, 1895).  
 SCHÜTTER, JOHN C.; "Heathwood," 5, Dacres Road, Forest Hill, S.E. (Dec., 1910).  
 SCLATER, W. L., M.A., F.Z.S.; 10, Sloane Court, S.W. (Aug., 1904).  
 SCLATER, PHILIP LUTLEY, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Odiham Priory, Winchfield, Hants. (Sept., 1902). (*Hon. Member*).  
 SCOTT, B. HAMILTON; Hamildean, Ipswich. (1912).  
 SEPPINGS, Captain J. W. H.; The Army Pay Office, Bootham, York. (Sept., 1907).  
 310 SETH-SMITH, DAVID, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; 34, Elsworthy Road, South Hampstead, N.W. (Dec, 1894).  
 SETH-SMITH, LESLIE M., B.A., M.B.O.U.; Alleyne, Caterham Valley, Surrey; and Kampala, Uganda. (July, 1902).  
 SHERBROOKE, Mrs. P.; Ravenswyke, Kirbymoorside, Yorks. (March, 1897).  
 SICH, HERBERT LEONARD; c/o Dr. L. Lovell-Keays, Park Lodge, East Hoathly, Sussex. (Feb., 1902).  
 SILVER, ALLEN; 303, High Road, Streatham, S.W. (Aug., 1904).  
 SIMPSON, ARCHIBALD; Oakfield House, Stanks, Crossgates, nr. Leeds. (Feb., 1901).  
 SMALLEY, F. W.; Challan Hall, Silverdale, nr. Carnforth, Lancs. (1912).  
 SMITH, C. BARNBY; Woodlands, Retford. (August, 1906).  
 SMITH, Miss E. L. DORIEN; Trescoe Abbey, Isle of Scilly, Cornwall. (August, 1908).  
 SORNBORGER, J. D.; Rowley, Massachusetts. (Oct., 1905).

- 320 SOUTHBESK, The Countess of; Kinnaird Castle, Brechin, N.B. (Feb., 1901).  
 SOUTHPORT CORPORATION; Curator; Hesketh Park, Southport. (Jan., 1904).  
 STANSFELD, Captain JOHN; Dunniald, Montrose, N.B. (Dec., 1896).  
 STANFORTH, Mrs.; Kirk Hamerton Hall, York. (Nov., 1897).  
 STAPLES-BROWNE, R.; Bampton, Oxfordshire. (August, 1908).  
 STEVENS, H.; Fairfield Road, Morecambe, Lancs. (Oct., 1911).  
 STIRLING, Mrs. CHARLES; Old Newton House, Doune. (Sept., 1904).  
 STOCKPORT CORPORATION; Superintendent; Vernon Park, Stockport. (Oct., 1902).  
 STURTON-JOHNSON, Miss; Oratava House, Ore, Hastings. (May, 1897).  
 STYLE, G. M.; 9, Smith Square, Westminster, S.W. (Jan., 1911).
- 330 SUFFOLK and BERKSHIRE, The Countess of; Charlton Park, Malmesbury. (Feb., 1909).  
 SUGGITT, ROBERT; Suggitt's Lane, Cleethorpes, Grimsby. (Dec., 1903).  
 SUTCLIFFE, ALBERT; Field House, Grimsby. (Feb., 1906).  
 SUTTON, C. PELHAM; Melbourne Lodge, Carlton Road, Putney, S.W. (1912).  
 SUTTON, Lady; Benham-Valence, Speen, Newbury. (Dec., 1901).  
 SWAYSLAND, WALTER; 47, Queen's Road, Brighton. (Orig. Mem.)\*
- TANNER, Dr. FRANK L.; Vanvert House, Guernsey. (Jan., 1904).  
 TANNER, Mrs. SLINGSBY; 48, Lower Sloane Street, S.W. (Oct., 1906).  
 TAVISTOCK, The Marquis of; Woburn Abbey, Beds. (1912).  
 TEMPLE, W. R.; Ormonde, Datchet, Bucks. (June, 1907).
- 340 TERRY, Major HORACE A., M.B.O.U. (late Oxfordshire Light Infantry); The Lodge, Upper Halliford, Slepperton. (Oct., 1902).  
 TESCHEMAKER, W. E., B.A.; Ringmore, Teignmouth, Devon. (May, 1904).  
 THOMAS, HENRY; 15, Climming Road, Birkdale, Southport. (Jan., 1895).  
 THOMAS, Miss F. G. F.; Weston Hall, Towcester, Northants. (March, 1899).  
 THOMAS, Mrs. HAIG; Moyles Court, Ringwood, Hants. (August, 1907).  
 THOMMASSET, BERNARD C., F.Z.S.; The Manor House, Ashmansworth, nr. Newbury. (July, 1896).  
 THOMMASSET, H. P.; Cascade Estate, Mahé, Seychelles. (Nov., 1906).  
 THOMPSON, Mrs. F. F.; Canandaigua, N.Y., U.S.A. (July, 1907).  
 THORNILEY, PERCY WRIGHT; Shooter's Hill, Wem., Shrewsbury. (Feb., 1902).  
 THORPE, CHARLES; Selborne, Springfield Road, Wallington, Surrey. (Dec., 1901).
- 350 THORPE, F. C.; The Zoo, Sunnyside, Worksop. (Jan., 1902).  
 TICEHURST, Dr. C. B.; Grove House, Lowestoft. (1912).  
 TICEHURST, NORMAN FREDERIC, M.A., M.B., F.R.C.S., F.Z.S.; 35, Pevensey Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea. (Dec., 1906).

- TOMES, W., J.P.; Glenmoor, 31, Billing Road, Northampton. (Dec., 1902).
- TOWNSEND, STANLEY M.; 3, Swift Street, Fulham. (Sept., 1898).
- TRENOW, EVELYN HENRY, F.Z.S.; Ivy Lodge, Epping, Essex. (Nov., 1910).
- TRESTRAIL, Mrs.; Southdale, Clevedon. (Sept., 1903).
- TREVOR-BATTYE, AUBYN, B. R., M.A., F.L.S.; Stoner Hill, Petersfield. (July, 1898).
- TUCKWELL, EDMUND H.; Berthorpe, Compton, near Guildford, Surrey. (1912).
- TURNER, Mrs. TURNER; Beaulieu Springs, Beaulieu, Hauts. (July, 1910).
- 360 TWKEDIE, Capt. W., 93rd Highlanders; Stobs Castle, Stobs Camp, By Hawick. (April, 1903).
- VALENTINE, ERNEST; 7, Highfield, Workington. (May, 1899).
- VAN OORT, Dr. E. D.; Museum of Natural History, Leiden, Holland.
- VERNON, Mrs. E. WARREN; Toddington Manor, Dunstable, Bedford. (Nov., 1907).
- VILLIERS, Mrs.; The Shielding, Ayr, N.B. (August, 1906).
- WADDELL, Miss PEDDIE; 4, Great Stuart Street, Edinburgh, N.B. (Feb., 1903).
- WAIT, Miss L. M. ST. A.; 12, Rosary Gardens, S.W. (Feb., 1909).
- WALKER, Miss; Persey House, Blairgowrie, N.B. (Jan., 1903).
- WALKER, Miss H. K. O.; Chesham, Bury, Lancs. (Feb., 1895).
- WALLACE, Mrs. WILLIAMSON; Kelton, Dumfries. (1912).
- 370 WALLOP; The Hon. FREDERICK; (Feb., 1902).
- WARDE, The Lady HARRIET; Knotley Hall, Tunbridge. (Aug., 1903).
- WATERFIELD, Mrs. NOEL E.; Port Soudan, Red Sea. (Sept., 1904).
- WATERHOUSE, Mrs. D.; 6, Esplanade, Scarborough. (Feb., 1903).
- WATSON, S.; 37, Tithebarn Street, Preston. (Feb., 1906).
- WELLINGTON, The Duchess of; West Green House, Hartley Wintney, Winchfield, Hauts. (1912).
- WHITAKER, JOSEPH I. S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; Malfitano, Palermo, Sicily. (August, 1903).
- WHITEHEAD, Mrs. HENRY; Haslem Hey, Bury, Lancs. (March, 1902).
- WHITEHEAD, JEFFERY; Mayes, East Grinstead, Sussex. (1912).
- WIGELSWORTH, JOSEPH, M.D., M.B.O.U.; Rainhill, Lancashire. (Oct., 1902).
- 380 WILLFORD, HENRY; Upland View, Havenstreet, Ryde, Isle of Wight. (Nov., 1907).
- WILLIAMS, Mrs. C. H.; 49, Okehampton Road, St. Thomas, Exeter. (May, 1902).
- WILLIAMS, Mrs. HOWARD; Oatlands, Sunbridge Avenue, Bromley, Kent. (April, 1902).

- WILLIAMS, SYDNEY, JUN., F.Z.S.; Holland Lodge, 275, Fore Street, Edmonton, N. (Feb., 1905).
- WILSON, MAURICE A., M.D.; Kirkby Overblow, Paunal, S. O., York. (Oct., 1905).
- WILSON, T. NEEDHAM; Oak Lodge, Bitterne, near Southampton. (Dec., 1901).
- WINCHELSEA and NOTTINGHAM, The Countess of; Harlech, Merioneth. (April, 1903).
- WOLFE, Miss GEORGINA; S. John's, 37, Granada Road, E. Southsea. (August, 1904).
- WOOLDRIDGE, Prof. G. H., M.R.C.V.S.; 30, Brixton Hill, S.W. (1912).
- WORKMAN, WM. HUGHES, M.B.O.U.; Lismore, Windsor, Belfast. (May, 1903).
- 390 WORMALD, H.; The Heath, Dereham, Norfolk. Dec., 1904).
- WRIGHT, R. N.; Church Hill, Robert Road, Handsworth, near Birmingham. (Dec., 1908).
- YOUNGER, Miss BARBARA HENDERSON; 4, Douglas Gardens, Edinburgh. (July, 1909).
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# Rules of the Avicultural Society.

*As amended January, 1908.*

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1.—The name of the Society shall be THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY and its object shall be the study of Foreign and British Birds in freedom and in captivity, Poultry, Pigeons and Canaries shall be outside the scope of the Society. The year of the Society, with that of each volume of the Society's Magazine, which shall be known as *The Avicultural Magazine*, shall commence with the month of November and end on the 31st of October following.

2.—The Avicultural Society shall consist of Ordinary and Honorary Members; and the latter shall be restricted in number to six, and be elected by the Council.

3.—The Officers of the Society shall be elected, annually if necessary, by members of the Council in manner hereinafter provided and shall consist of a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Business Secretary, a Correspondence Secretary, an Editor, a Treasurer, an Auditor, a Scrutineer, and a Council of fifteen members. The Secretaries, Editor, and Treasurer, shall be *ex officio* Members of the Council.

4.—New Members shall be proposed in writing, and the name and address of every person thus proposed, with the name of the Member proposing him, shall be published in the next issue of the Magazine. Unless the candidate shall, within two weeks after the publication of his name in the Magazine, be objected to by at least two Members, he shall be deemed to be duly elected. If five Members shall lodge with the Business Secretary objections to any candidate he shall not be elected, but the signatures to the signed objections must be verified by the Scrutineer. If two or more Members (but less than five) shall object to any candidate, the Secretary shall announce in the next number of the Magazine that such objections have been lodged (but shall not disclose the names of the objectors), and shall request the Members to vote upon the question of the election of such candidate. Members shall record their votes in sealed letters addressed to the Scrutineer, and a candidate shall not be elected unless two thirds of the votes recorded be in his favour; nor shall a candidate be elected if five or more votes be recorded against his election.

5.—Each Member shall pay an annual subscription of 10/-, to be due and payable in advance on the 1st of November in each year. New Members shall pay in addition, an entrance fee of 10/6; and, on payment of their entrance fee and subscription, they shall be entitled to receive all the numbers of the Society's Magazine for the current year.

6.—Members intending to resign their membership at the end of the current year of the Society are expected to give notice to the Business Secretary before the first of October, so that their names may not be included in the "List of Members," which shall be published annually in the November number of the Magazine.

7.—The Magazine of the Society shall be issued on or about the first day of every month,\* and forwarded, post free, to all the Members who shall have paid their subscriptions for the year: but no Magazine shall be sent or delivered to any Member until the annual subscription shall have reached the hands of the Business Secretary or the Publishers. Members whose subscriptions shall not have been paid as above by the first day in September in any year shall cease to be Members of the Society, and shall not be re-admitted until a fresh entrance fee, as well as the annual subscription, shall have been paid.

8.—The Secretaries, Editor, and Treasurer shall be elected for a term of five years, and should a vacancy occur, it may be temporarily filled up by the Executive Committee (see Rule 10). At the expiration of the term of five years in every case, it shall be competent for the Council to nominate the same officer, or another Member, for a further term of five years, unless a second candidate be proposed by not less than twenty-five members of at least two years standing, as set forth below.

In the September number of the Magazine preceding the retirement from office of the Secretaries, Editor, or Treasurer, the Council shall publish the names of those gentlemen whom they have nominated to fill the vacancies thus created; and these gentlemen shall be deemed duly elected unless another candidate or candidates be proposed by not less than fifteen Members of at least two years standing. Such proposal, duly seconded and containing the written consent of the nominee to serve, if elected, in the capacity for which he is proposed, must reach the Business Secretary, on or before the 15th of September.

The Council shall also publish yearly in the September number of the Magazine the names of those gentlemen nominated by them for the posts of Auditor and Scrutineer respectively.

9.—The Members of the Council shall retire by rotation, two at the end of each year of the Society (unless a vacancy or vacancies shall occur otherwise) and two other Members of the Society shall be recommended by the Council to take the place of those retiring. The names of the two Members recommended shall be printed in the September number of *The Avicultural Magazine*. Should the Council's selection be objected to by fifteen or more Members, these shall have power to put forward two other candidates whose names, together with the signatures of no less than

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\*Owing to the extra pressure of work, the October and November numbers are liable to be late.

fifteen Members proposing them, must reach the Hon. Business Secretary *by the 15th of September*. The names of the four candidates will then be printed on a voting paper and sent to each Member with the October number of the Magazine, and the result of the voting published in the November issue. Should no alternative candidates be put forward, in the manner and by the date above specified, the two candidates recommended by the Council shall be deemed to have been duly elected. In the event of an equality of votes the President shall have a casting vote.

If any Member of the Council does not attend a meeting for two years in succession, the Council shall have power to elect another Member in his place.

10.—Immediately after the election of the Council, that body shall proceed to elect three from its Members (*ex officio* Members not being eligible). These three, together with the Secretaries and Editor, shall form a Committee known as the Executive Committee. Members of the Council shall be asked every year (whether there has been an election of that body or not) if they wish to stand for the Executive. and in any year when the number of candidates exceeds three there shall be an election of the Executive.

The duties of the Executive Committee shall be as follows:

- (i). To sanction all payments to be made on behalf of the Society.
- (ii). In the event of the resignation of any of the officers during the Society's year, to fill temporarily the vacancy until the end of the year. In the case of the office being one which is held for more than one year (*e. g.* Secretaries, Editor, or Treasurer, the appointment shall be confirmed by the Council at its next meeting.
- (iii). To act for the Council in the decision of any other matter that may arise in connection with the business of the Society.

The decision of any matter by the Executive to be settled by a simple majority (five to form a quorum). In the event of a tie on any question, such question shall be forthwith submitted by letter to the Council for their decision.

The Executive shall not have power

- (i). To add to or alter the Rules;
- (ii). To expel any Member;
- (iii). To re-elect the Secretaries, Editor, or Treasurer for a second term of office.

It shall not be lawful for the Treasurer to pay any account unless such account be duly initialed by the Executive.

It shall be lawful for the Business Secretary or Editor to pledge the Society's credit for a sum not exceeding £15.

Should a Member wish any matter to be brought before the *Council* direct, such matter should be sent to the Business Secretary with a letter stating that it is to be brought before the Council at their next meeting otherwise communications will in the first place be brought before the Executive.

A decision of a majority of the Council, or a majority of the Executive endorsed by the Council, shall be final and conclusive in all matters.

11.—The Editor shall have an absolute discretion as to what matter shall be published in the Magazine (subject to the control of the Executive Committee). The Business Secretary and Editor shall respectively refer all matters of doubt and difficulty to the Executive Committee.

12.—The Council (but not a Committee of the Council) shall have power to alter and add to the Rules, from time to time, in any manner they may think fit. Five to form a quorum at any meeting of the Council.

13.—The Council shall have power to expel any Member from the Society at any time without assigning any reason.

14.—Neither the Office of Scrutineer nor that of Auditor shall be held for two consecutive years by the same person.

15.—The Scrutineer shall not reveal to any person how any Member shall have voted.

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# The Society's Medal.

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## RULES.

The Medal may be awarded at the discretion of the Committee, to any Member who shall succeed in breeding, in the United Kingdom, any species of bird which shall not be known to have been previously bred in captivity in Great Britain or Ireland. Any Member wishing to obtain the Medal must send a detailed account for publication in the Magazine within about eight weeks from the date of hatching of the young and furnish such evidence of the facts as the Executive Committee may require. The Medal will be awarded only in cases where the young shall live to be old enough to feed themselves, and to be wholly independent of their parents.

The account of the breeding must be reasonably full so as to afford instruction to our Members, and should describe the plumage of the young and *be of value as a permanent record of the nesting and general habits of the species*. These points will have great weight when the question of awarding the Medal is under consideration.

The parents of the young must be the *bona fide* property of the breeder. An evasion of this rule, in any form whatever, will not only disqualify the breeder from any claim to a Medal in that particular instance, but will seriously prejudice any other claims he or she may subsequently advance for the breeding of the same or any other species.

In every case the decision of the Committee shall be final.

The Medal will be forwarded to each Member as soon after it shall have been awarded as possible.

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The Medal is struck in bronze (but the Committee reserve the right to issue it in *silver* in very special cases), and measures  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. It bears on the obverse a representation of two birds with a nest containing eggs, and the words "The Avicultural Society—founded 1894." On the reverse is the following inscription: "Awarded to (*name of recipient*) for rearing the young of (*name of species*), a species not previously bred in captivity in the United Kingdom."

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### *Members to whom Medals have been awarded.*

For a list of the Medal awards during the First Series see Vol. II. (*New Series*), p. 18.

For a list of the Medal awards during the New Series see Vol. VI. (*New Series*), pp. 20-22  
Vol. VII. (*New Series*), p. 20.

#### SERIES II.

- Vol. VI., p. 257 Mr. W. E. TESCHEMAKER for breeding the Dwarf Ground Dove (*Chamaepelia griseola*), in 1908.
- .. .. p. 337 Mr. T. H. NEWMAN, for breeding the Partridge Bronze-wing Pigeon (*Geophaps scripta*), in 1908.
- .. .. p. 345 Mr. C. BARNBY SMITH, for breeding the Black Francolin (*Francolinus vulgaris*), in 1908.

- Vol. VII., p. 208 Mr. W. E. TESCHEMAKER, for breeding the Cinnamon Tree Sparrow (*Passer cinnamomeus*), in 1908.
- „ „ p. 321 Mr. W. E. TESCHEMAKER, for breeding the Rufous-backed Mannikin (*Spermestes nigriceps*), in 1909.
- „ „ p. 334 Mr. W. T. PAGE, for breeding the Grey-winged Ouzel (*Merula bouboul*), in 1909.
- SERIES III.
- Vol. I. p. 28 Mr. E. J. BRGOK, for breeding the Black Lory (*Chalcopsittacus ater*), in 1909.
- „ „ p. 81 Mr. W. E. TESCHEMAKER for breeding the Giant Whydah (*Chera procne*), in 1909.
- „ „ p. 120 Mr. T. H. NEWMAN, for breeding the Deceptive Turtle Dove (*Turtur decipiens*), in 1909.
- „ „ pp. 158 } Mr. T. H. NEWMAN, for breeding the White-throated  
and 194 } Pigeon (*Columba albicularis*), in 1909.
- „ „ p. 267 Mr. P. W. THORNILKY, for breeding the Argentine Blackbird (*Turdus fuscater*), in 1910.
- Vol. II. p. 173 Mr. T. H. NEWMAN for breeding the Snow Pigeon (*Columba leuconota*), in 1910.
- „ „ p. 269 Mr. DUNCAN PARKER for breeding the Red-Vented Blue Bonnet (*Psephotus hæmatorrhous*), in 1911.
- „ „ p. 317 Mr. W. E. TESCHEMAKER, for breeding the Sprosser (*Daulias philomela*), in 1911.
- „ „ p. 368 Mr. H. D. ASTLEY, for breeding the Orange-headed Ground Thrush (*Geocichla citrina*), in 1911.
- Vol. II., pp. 333 } Mr. H. D. ASTLEY, for breeding the Rose-breasted  
and 370 } Grosbeak (*Hedymeles ludovicianus*), in 1911.
- Vol. III. p. 28 Mr. W. E. TESCHEMAKER, for breeding the Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes vulgaris*), in 1911.
- „ „ p. 114 Mr. W. E. PAGE for breeding the Indian White-Eye (*Zosterops palpebrosa*), in 1911.
- „ „ p. 243 Mr. H. D. ASTLEY, for breeding the Queen Alexandra Parrakeet (*Spathopterns alexandrae*), in 1912.
- „ „ p. 273 Mr. W. E. TESCHEMAKER, for breeding the Crested Lark (*Galerita cristata*), in 1912.
- „ „ pp. 293 } Mr. W. E. TESCHAMAKER, for breeding the Black Red-  
and 330 } start (*Ruticilla titys*), in 1912.
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H. Goodchild del.

THE RING NECKED TEAL *Nettion torquatum.*

West, Newman chr

THE  
AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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THE RING-NECKED TEAL.

*Nettion torquatum.*

By D. SETH-SMITH, F.Z.S.

If the Teal are the most beautiful of the ducks, the Ring-necked Teal may I think be said to be the most beautiful of all the Teal, at any rate it is surpassed in beauty by none of the many species that have been imported alive.

The first living specimen I ever saw was a male in Herr Blaauw's collection in Holland about three years ago, and I was immensely struck with its beauty. More recently I have seen single specimens, all males, in the Zoological Gardens of Berlin and Cologne. I was told that some few years ago some half dozen specimens, all males, were imported into Germany. It appears, however, that at least one female reached that country, for last year a few pairs were offered for sale, all of which, I ascertained, had been bred in Germany. This year others have been offered from the same source I imagine.

I had the good fortune to be able to secure a pair of these little Teal on behalf of the Zoological Society last year, and then for the first time saw the female, a very beautiful little duck, though without the brilliant colouring of her mate. The pair have not bred, which is perhaps not surprising their first year, as ducks generally like some little time to settle down before making any serious attempts at nesting.

The Ring-necked Teal inhabits Paraguay and Argentina, but appears to be a very local species, nowhere very abundant.

Mr. Hudson gives the following note on the species:—"In the neighbourhood of Buenos Ayres the Ring-necked Teal is strictly migratory, and in the month of October appears in small flocks in the marshes along the river; but in the interior of the country it is seldom met with. They are extremely active birds, constantly flying about from place to place both by day and night; and in the love-season, when they alight in a pool of water, the males immediately engage in a spirited combat. While flying they utter a peculiar jarring sound, and occasionally a quacking note, rapidly repeated and sounding like a strange laugh; but on the water, especially in the evening, the male emits a long inflected note, plaintive and exquisitely pure in sound—a more melodious note it would be difficult to find even among the songsters."

Although the sexes of this duck are so very distinct, the drake has no eclipse plumage, or at any rate our example has failed to don one. As is well known the drakes of the Northern Hemisphere ducks, in all cases in which the sexes differ in plumage, change their dress, to one superficially resembling that of the female, for a short time after the breeding season. In most of the Southern Hemisphere ducks however, this change does not take place, and we find species such as the Rosy-bill, the Brazilian Teal, and the Ringed Teal, possessing no vestige of change.

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## NESTING OF THE WHINCHAT.

*Pratincola rubetra.*

By W. E. TESCHEMAKER, B.A.

The Whinchat is one of those interesting species which do not readily yield their secrets to the student. One reason for this is that we only know rather more than a quarter of their lives—that quarter which they spend in their breeding area. Why do people continue to write books about British Birds, as seen in Britain, but never make the least attempt to give us a book devoted to British Birds, as seen abroad? We may paraphrase a well-known line and ask what do they know of British Birds who only Britain know? How fascinating an account of our summer migrants studied in their winter haunts would be!

During the past few years I have bred and carefully observed both the Stonechat and the Whinchat, and yet I cannot persuade myself that I have made any considerable advance towards understanding the many problems which are interwoven with the life-history of either species. If there be any of our members who think that they know all that they need know about our indigenous species let me ask them one or two questions. Why do all Whinchats migrate while the majority of Stonechats remain more or less stationary throughout the year? If the Stonechat can maintain itself here during the winter, why cannot the Whinchat? If the Stonechat is the hardier bird, as one may reasonably infer from its frequently wintering here and from the fact that it crosses the North Sea in March, why does the Whinchat nest so much further north? Or again, if the former is the hardier bird, why do we find it nesting in such an extremely hot climate as the south of Spain and N. Africa, where the Whinchat is only seen as a migrant? If the Whinchat is the more delicate of the two, why is it found in greater numbers in the Eastern Counties, whilst the Stonechat is much more numerous in the (warmer) Western Counties? Why does the Whinchat nest at high elevations in the southern part of its range and the Stonechat on the plains, whilst in the northern part of their range these situations are more or less reversed?

Although it might be possible to somewhat elucidate some of these questions we will not further discuss them, but turn at once to the subject of my present notes. The Whinchat nests, according to Howard Saunders, in many parts of Central and Northern Europe as far north as 70° N. lat., in Scandinavia, and as far east as the Ural Mountains, but in S. Europe is chiefly seen as a migrant. After the nesting season, we see individuals and small family parties hurrying south in this country, and we are told that the western contingent of this species winters in Africa, as far south as Fantee on the west side and Abyssinia on the east. Then the curtain is rung down and our little Whinchat passes into the unknown.

Through the very kind assistance, however, of our member, Dr. E. Hopkinson, I am able to lift just for a single instant a very small corner of the curtain so that we can obtain one momentary glance at our Whinchat in its winter quarters. Dr. Hopkinson has

been contributing for some time past to our contemporary, *Bird Notes*, an extremely interesting series of notes on the Birds of Gambia, and amongst these notes (Vol. VIII. p. 294) may be found the following reference:—"Whinchats are common in Gambia from about November to March. They are found in pairs or singly in the old corn-fields and other open spaces; as active restless little birds here as they are at home, flitting from bush to bush or perching on the tall stalks which remain standing here and there about the fields." Hearing that Dr. Hopkinson was home on leave, I ventured to bombard him with various queries on this subject, which with great good nature he endeavoured to answer, as follows:—"I have occasionally seen an odd one or two as late as May, but I am pretty sure they do not breed there. Most of those one sees are in young plumage, more sandy than the adults. I have never noticed specially on what they fed, but in West Africa there is generally every possible variety of insect-food. By 'corn-fields' please understand 'Guinea-corn' after the harvest—a very different thing to our corn-fields: dry sandy tracts covered with long dry stalks of the Guinea-corn (a millet) from which the heads have been cut. Last year, when I stayed till the rains, the first time that I saw Whinchats was in the early part of November; I remember seeing one or two before the arrival of the Wagtails and making a note of it." I particularly enquired whether any males had been heard to sing but evidently Dr. Hopkinson does not share my view that all our migrants probably sing in their winter areas for he adds: "I have never heard a Whinchat sing in the Gambia; a few calls, nothing more. I really cannot believe that Nightingales at all events do sing abroad. Their song must have been noticed by someone, if they did."

Here then we have a peep at the Whinchat flitting from stem to stem of the Guinea-corn and we may note that it does not reach the Gambia until November though it crosses the Straits of Gibraltar in September (Irby), thus showing us how leisurely a journey the autumnal migration of this (and many other) species is. Howard Saunders' statement that it leaves us in October is surely an error. Though I am too far west to see it frequently as a migrant, on those occasions which I have noted it has always been much

earlier. For instance, in the last week of August last year I saw an adult female and a young male pitch on the Shaldon Embankment (near my house) and, after spending an hour in resting and feeding, "lift" again, presumably to essay the adventurous feat of crossing the Channel at its point of greatest width. We have no evidence that the Whinchat sings at Christmas; nevertheless I can testify to the fact that the Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow-wren do so and we know that young male Nightingales are trained vocalists when they return to us in the spring, also that they are in full song when they reach the Italian shores. I want someone, therefore, to explain to me where they acquire that wonderful song unless it be in Africa.

When, a couple of years since, I succeeded in breeding the Stonechat (for an account of which see *Bird Notes* Vol. IX.), it seemed a reasonable inference that something might be done with the Whinchat. However, it does not do to jump to conclusions in any matter connected with birds and several years' study of this species convinced me that it was not going to be so easy a task. Whilst the Whinchat is sunning itself in Gambia, the Stonechat may be seen apparently enjoying life amidst the bleak and weather-beaten "tors" of Dartmoor, fifteen hundred feet above sea-level. The Stonechat may be easily kept in captivity even by a beginner (an exhibitor who begged for one of my young Stonechats moulted it several times in a cage without the least difficulty), but anyone who can carry a Whinchat through a winter and through a spring moult in high condition may justly consider himself an expert—in fact there are many self-styled "experts" who could not perform such a feat. There was also the question of rearing the young. Miss Turner assured me that she saw a male Stonechat break up a lizard and give it to its young piecemeal and my Stonechats fed their young partly on grass-seeds but it seemed very unlikely, considering the delicate digestion of adult Whinchats, that the young of the latter would prosper on any similar diet. Still another consideration was that, whereas I had been able to trap hen Stonechats myself, I should have to depend on others for a supply of Whinchats; so much depends upon the treatment the hens of insectivorous species receive during the first few days of captivity.

The first two hen Whinchats I received this spring had been "meated off" on one of those dreadful compounds sometimes most quaintly termed "insectivorous (?) mixtures," so I opened the window and let them fly. I then obtained four more which were forwarded immediately after capture and reached me in good order. After a couple of days' close observation I was able to pick out a breeding hen with tolerable certainty; I also retained another, nearly as promising, as a second string and released the others. With the majority of the monogamous species the association of two females with one male would mean failure, but there are exceptions and previous experience led me to think that this species would prove one of the latter. Changing the scenery in a small aviary is never a very difficult matter and I converted the 16ft. by 16ft. space in which the Sprossers bred in 1911 from a Bamboo-swamp into a Common in next to no time with a load of gorse and three large sacks full of turf and heather from Dartmoor. The cemented basin was emptied, the swamp allowed to dry and, Hey Presto, the thing was done. The gorse proved to be a superfluous bit of scenery for the Whinchats carefully avoided it; moreover so did the Stonechats, when they nested, and, when I add that one of the latter when trapped on Dartmoor had a very sore foot, I expect our members will agree with me that the one and only reason why both these species perch on gorse in a state of freedom is probably that in their own particular localities they have nothing much else to perch on.

On the 5th May, just as the long spring drought was breaking up, I turned out the Whinchats with three Finch-larks and the former seemed much pleased with their surroundings; they revelled in the spring showers, inspected the Common and perched on the broken heads of some of the bamboos exactly as one might imagine they had recently perched on the swaying stalks of the Guinea-corn in the Gambia. The Finch-larks on the other hand led a somewhat chequered existence and my impression is that they did not enjoy the past summer at all. I tried to explain to them that everyone cannot expect to be happy in this world of contrasts and that the same Fate, which had made the Whinchats Kings and Queens, had made them the Pawns in the game—but they did not seem convinced. Upon this peaceful scene there descended, on the night of the 14th May,

my deadly enemies, the Tawny Owls; they snipped off one leg of the male Whinchat, cut a wad of skin and feathers out of the back of a hen Wheatear, killed outright my only two hen Snowfinches and then retired, with their usual discretion, before I could avenge my dead. O happy London aviarist! if you only knew what it is to be raided by Hawks and Owls and Magpies and Stoats and Weasels and Moles and Fieldmice you would indeed call yourself thrice blessed! I nursed the poor victim and in due course released him; for a week or more he potted about the garden, apparently little the worse for the amputation, and then he drifted away to fresh fields and pastures new.

I obtained another male Whinchat and we made a fresh start. This male was in fine adult plumage and soon began to sing and to flirt with the most brightly coloured female. With drooped and quivering wings, tail expanded and somewhat raised, and head thrown backwards he would pose before and sing to the female, showing off his handsome tan waistcoat and the contrasted areas of pure white on the wings and tail to perfection. I never realised before what an extremely handsome little bird a male Whinchat is. On the 12th June the breeding hen was carrying nesting material. It will be necessary to distinguish between these two hens in order to make my story intelligible, so we will call this one "Beauty," because she possessed the greatest gift of the Gods; the other we will call "The Flirt" because she seemed most anxious to win the affections of the male and used to follow him about with quivering wings. The male assisted in the construction of the nest and on the 19th Beauty was missing and had presumably commenced to sit. The nest was on the Common, under a tuft of heather and close to the wooden panelling of the aviary, but so well concealed that it was impossible to look into it without removing the heather, in the very roots of which it was embedded.

Now we come to the queer part of my story. A few days later The Flirt was also missing. Where was The Flirt's nest? I had seen no pairing, no building—yet she must have a nest somewhere. Now the Common was not what you would call extensive—perhaps some nine feet by five feet—but looking for a Whinchat's nest is at all times rather like hunting for a needle in a bundle of

hay, and I looked in vain. The annoying part of it was that it was impossible to examine Beauty's nest without stepping on the Common, and, if one did this, the chances were that one would step on The Flirt's nest. So I waited and watched. Now and again a sharp eye would get a glimpse of Beauty leaving her nest as one entered the aviary, but The Flirt would either leave the nest before that event or else she would judiciously select the exact moment when one's back was turned. So the mystery remained a mystery until almost the end of the last chapter. O wonderful Book of Birds! So vividly interesting and yet so hard to translate and with so much written between the lines! What mistakes we often make in trying to read that Book!

The male never sat and never fed the hens, so when, on the 2nd July, I saw him stealthily carry an insect to the nest I knew that the Stork had alighted on our aviary and that Beauty was a proud mother. A day or two later The Flirt also began to feed, so I concluded that the Stork must have paid us another visit, and from the extraordinary celerity with which the live-bait disappeared one might have reasonably thought that there were at least a dozen young Whinchats. The Flirt, mysterious as ever, would not give us the least hint as to the whereabouts of her family. She would perch in a medlar-tree, piping "u-tic," (the first syllable very long, the second very short) and sometimes "u-tic-tic" for half-an-hour at a time until one's patience was exhausted. But one day I detected The Flirt in the very act of leaving the nest and—it was Beauty's nest she left. At last the mystery was solved. I went down on my knees and turned over every inch of the Common. Yes, there was only one nest, and that contained five well-grown young Whinchats, evidently all of the same family. What then had The Flirt been doing all this time? She had been helping her more fortunate sister to rear the latter's family: just that and nothing less. I have known polygamy where there should have been monogamy; I have known communal nests containing clutches of eggs laid by two hens; I have known assistance given in rearing a brood by a parent who had lost her own brood, and also by the young of an earlier brood, but that a hen, whose charms had been despised and advances rejected, should voluntarily assist a rival whom she had every reason

to hate, seemed so strange, so contrary to nature, as to be almost unbelievable. Yet it was so. O splendid little lady, who chose the better part! O wonderful Book of Birds!

In the very early hours of the 14th we had a terrific thunder-storm followed by a cloud-burst of a tropical character, three quarters of an inch of rain falling in half an hour. It must have needed courage to stick to the post of duty during that storm, but the two little Chats evidently never flinched, for on the following day the five youngsters flew and looked bonny. They were a light brown on the back, many of the feathers being margined with buff, the lower half of the tail feathers much darker brown, the breast sparsely spotted with dark brown, the light buff superciliary streak rather conspicuous. They kept well apart, each selecting a good hiding where there was thick cover, and it was impossible to locate them, except by the aid of the faint chuckling notes they uttered when hungry. On the 17th I approached the aviary quietly and saw one perched on the top of a gorse-bush (it had yet to learn discretion), sunning itself. But The Flirt was doing sentinel duty and was well prepared for such an emergency; she flew straight at the youngster and, with a dexterous stroke of her wing, knocked him headlong into the thickest part of the cover. O wonderful Book of Birds! The adults began to moult on the 19th.

On the 3rd August I caught all the Whinchats and made the following note:—"Colour of young Chats. Some have warm buff breasts (probably males) and some whitish-buff ditto (probably females); all have some spots and striations on the breast; basal half of primaries white on anterior margins; rest of flights blackish-brown; some have a buff spot on angle of wing (probably males); upper half of tail white except two centre rectrices; curious long reddish-brown median upper tail coverts, nearly  $1\frac{1}{3}$  ins., tips rather square (possible object to conceal contrasted colour areas of tail); superciliary streak light buff, more conspicuous in some (possibly males)."

I released the whole family except one young male on the same day. As in all other matters connected with birds, this has to be carefully and wisely done, not relying on "luck," or the erstwhile prisoners will assuredly starve; for, though a bird never forgets any-

thing, it does not know in a strange locality where to find food, and it has become rusty in the art of catching insects. I notice that when these starving birds return to the aviary for food, as they often will, their owners sometimes write enthusiastic letters to the weekly press, announcing that they can prove that birds prefer captivity to freedom! However, given fine summer weather and liberal feeding (supplementary to what they can find), they soon become self-supporting. For several days my Whinchats required a lot of assistance, especially the youngsters, who seemed to forage for nothing but ants (on which they had been partly reared). With a whistle and a swing of the bait-can I could call them up at any time; in fact, a Bank Holiday tripper, one of the many readers of a certain weekly paper, who paid me a visit on the 5th, found me sitting in the garden with the whole family taking lunch under my chair. On the following day they disappeared, and, though it seemed odd that they should all go on the same day, still, as they looked quite prosperous when last seen, I think it probable that all went well and that in due course they flitted away southward over the dim blue hills on their long journey to the corn-fields of the Gambia. *Quod felix faustumque sit.*

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P.S.—The young male did very well in a cage. He underwent an extensive moult, especially of the breast and neck feathers, and yet he sang throughout the moult. On the 23rd August I watched him pulling several breast feathers out with his beak. After the moult, the crown was darker, the breast brighter and had lost almost all the dark spots; the median tail coverts, above alluded to, were replaced by others rather shorter with pointed tips; a small white patch appeared near the angle of the wing, almost entirely concealed by the lesser coverts.

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## AVIARY NOTES.

By H. E. GODDARD.

In my perusal of the monthly numbers of the *Avicultural Magazine*, it has often occurred to me that it would be a good thing if some of our members, whose names we only know through their appearance in the yearly list, would give us their experiences from time to time. I refer especially to those who, like myself, keep but a small number of birds, and those of the most commonly imported and, therefore, cheap species.

My own experience dates from about twenty-five years ago, when I purchased a pair of Bronze Mannikins, which, though not particularly interesting themselves, gave me that love for the little foreigners which I have never lost. The list of birds which I have kept is not a very extensive one:—Waxbills, Avadavats, Ribbon Finches, Gouldian, Zebra, Long-tailed Grass Finches, Red Crested Cardinals, Green and Grey Singing Finches and Ruficaudas, Budgerigars, Cockateels, Madagascar and Blue-winged Love Birds and Blossom-headed Parrakeets practically comprising the lot. My only experience of Soft-bills, largely through want of time to attend to them, has been with Pekin Nightingales, cheap, but nevertheless very delightful birds and mostly, easily tamed. But the birds which have and still attract me most are the small seed-eaters, Waxbills and Grass Finches, especially the former. My pocket is a modest one and consequently I have had to confine my attention to the more common varieties. Of these I have had, at various times, the common and green Avadavats, Cordon Bleu, Orange-cheek, Orange-breasted, Common African and Cinereous Waxbills.

With the exception of the Green Avadavat, I have had more experience of these birds than of any of the others I have mentioned and, therefore, will try and give, in as few words as possible, my ideas of them as desirable inmates of an aviary.

They are all delightful little birds and have given me many a happy hour watching their interesting ways. Of course, we know that the great aim of the aviculturist is to get his birds to reproduce their species, and although this has been my wish for many years past, I must frankly confess that up to the present, I have completely

failed. One pair of Cordons in my possession some years ago did get as far as young birds, but as far as could be judged never attempted to feed them. They built a very nice nest completely domed over, with hole at side, well concealed in a wire flower basket. The birds sat splendidly and there the matter ended. Possibly with another attempt they might have succeeded but, unfortunately, the hen died, and although the cock bird lived for eight years and was provided with other partners yet no hen lived long enough to go to nest. Herein perhaps lies the difficulty in breeding these birds. It seems almost an impossibility to get a true pair of birds to live long enough to get thoroughly used to the climate and their surroundings, either the cock or the hen "pop off" just when you think you are about to be successful. But I suppose aviculture will always be full of such disappointments.

With the other Waxbills or Avadavats I have never got beyond eggs and, even when the birds laid, it was without the slightest attempt at making a nest. Apart, however, from breeding, their little lives are full of interest, the sprightly love dance of the Cordon with his shrill whistle, the sweet little song of the Avadavat and the warning note of the Orange-cheek, each has its charm. Then again the plumage is not to be despised. What is more beautiful than the full dress of the little cock Avadavat. It has often seemed to me that if these birds were expensive they would be much more highly prized. The one I have now was purchased last Autumn out of colour. He started to don his full dress in May and completed it by the end of June. The red patches on the underparts appeared to extend gradually, but whether by moulting the old feathers and growing fresh ones, or by the colour of the existing feathers changing, I am unable to say. Has this point ever been cleared up?

I have found the Cordon Bleus the most difficult to get acclimatised. They are usually in such poor condition when they arrive here that it is no easy matter to pull them round. The best thing, in my experience, when they will take it is the green fly or aphid so common on our rose trees. The other Waxbills appear to offer no special difficulty if they are in reasonably good condition when purchased.

The best guide as to condition seems to me to be the eyes. If they are at all sunken reject the birds, but if they are bright and full, even though the plumage may be defective, it is usually pretty safe to take them, as with reasonable care for the first few weeks they will soon be in the pink of condition. Even with the Cinereous Waxbill, which is usually considered very delicate, I found no difficulty. Perhaps, however, I should not say much on this point as I have had only one pair, but they lived in my aviary for a good many years. One of them escaped twice, and on one occasion was at large for two days, but he kept in the immediate neighbourhood and seemed very pleased when I was able to get him into the aviary once more. That is one of the most striking characteristics of these little feathered mites, their great contentment with their captivity.

Of other birds I have kept there is not much to say. Zebra Finches have always been short-lived. This may not be the general experience but it has always been mine. Gouldians and Ruficaudas are delightful birds, but at present I have only a cock bird of the latter left, and with their current high prices am not likely to replace them. Ribbon Finches are somewhat dull and clumsy and a bit of a nuisance with the other small birds.

As regards accommodation, I have a cage of the Crystal Palace variety indoors, principally used for wintering the small birds, an outdoor aviary with flight 16ft. by 8ft. and indoor shelter 4ft. by 8ft. and part of my 18ft. greenhouse wired off. The last named appears to suit the Waxbills very well and they do no appreciable harm to the plants growing there.

I am aware that there is no matter of great interest in these personal notes, but they are written in the hope that they will be the means of bringing some of our retiring members forward, as after all it is the sum of the little experiences which make up the total of general knowledge, and it is only by gathering together the general concensus of opinion that we can arrive at definite results. Will some members who have been successful breeders of Waxbills now come forward and give us of their wisdom? I venture to think that I shall not be the only reader interested.

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## BIRD NOTES FROM THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

BY THE CURATOR.

An important recent addition to the collection of birds is a pair of Great-billed Ravens (*Corvultur crassirostris*), from Abyssinia, a present from the Marquess of Tavistock, and the first of their kind to be exhibited in the collection.

This remarkable Raven is about the size of the common species, glossy black, with a brownish shade to some of the upper wing-coverts, and the back of the head is decorated with a large white patch. But the most remarkable feature of this bird is its bill, the upper mandible of which is greatly swollen and arched, the colour being black, with the tips white.

In habits this Raven does not appear to differ appreciably from other Ravens, feeding for the most part on carrion, while small animals, insects and fruit are also taken. Its voice is a harsh croak.

The Zoological Society has recently purchased from the sale of Mons. Pauwel's collection some rare and interesting pigeons; namely, one Wallace's Fruit-Pigeon (*Ptilopus wallacei*), a beautiful bird of pale grey, green and orange, with a blood-red cap on the crown; a pair of Pearl-spotted Fruit Pigeons (*Ptilopus zonurus*), green with yellow heads, a band of grey on the nape and pink spots on the wing coverts; a pair of Orange-bellied Fruit Pigeons (*Ptilopus iozonus*), small birds of a dark green colour, with greyish-blue shoulder patches, and a large patch of rich orange on the abdomen; and a single specimen of the Yellow-bellied Ground Dove (*Phlogoenas helviventris*), a species allied to the well-known Blood-breasted Pigeon. In colour it is deep chestnut above, with the breast and underparts yellow. It is one of the most striking looking doves one has seen for some time.

The above birds are natives of the Aru Islands and all are new to the Zoological Society's collection, and probably to aviculture generally.

Besides these, however, there is a splendid specimen of the White Fruit Pigeon (*Myristicivora luctuosa*) from Celebes, of which a



Photo by D. Seth-Smith.

West, Newman proc.

WHITE FRUIT-PIGEON  
*(Myristicivora luctuosa).*



photograph is reproduced herewith ; a pair of Blood-breasted Pigeons from the Phillipines ; four Smith's Ground Doves (*Geophaps smithi*) from Northern Australia, and a few others of less importance.

The pair of Crimson-finches in the Summer Aviary, after successfully rearing a brood of three young birds, made a second nest and in spite of the lateness of the season and the lowness of the temperature especially at night, are now rearing a second brood.

The only other recent nesting result to record is the hatching of a brood of eight young Egyptian Geese and one young Chestnut-breasted Teal. Three years ago we reared our first young of this fine Australian species which were hatched in November. D. S-S.

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## REVIEW.

### STUDIES IN BIRD MIGRATION. \*

When an author publishes a book on the subject which has been his life-long study, the results cannot fail to be of interest, and when that subject is one about which so much mystery has been made in the past, and that is still but imperfectly understood, one may well expect a considerable addition to the knowledge already existing on the subject.

Mr. Eagle Clarke has given us a delightful book, written in a remarkably clear style, and explaining in a manner, which has not been attempted before, the remarkably complex migrations which are continually taking place in our islands. The Chapter of the Starling, for instance, is a model of how such a series of very complicated facts should be treated, and we venture to think that many readers will learn with some surprise of the practically continuous movements that are going on amongst some of our commonest species throughout the year. We have mentioned the Starling in particular, but there are almost equally good Chapters on other common species, namely, the Swallow, Fieldfare, White Wagtail, Song Thrush, Skylark, Lapwing, and Rook. These Chapters alone

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\* *Studies in Bird Migration*, by W. EAGLE CLARKE ; 2 vols.. Svo. with maps, weather charts, and other illustrations. London : GURNEY & JACKSON. 18/-.

form a complete *vade mecum* to all the different kinds of migration that take place over our islands.

The whole of the second volume, and part of the first, is devoted to accounts of the author's visits to various Lighthouses, Lightships, and lonely islets round our shores. These accounts are pleasantly written and include a complete list of all the birds obtained at the various stations.

The island which has been most continuously worked in this respect is 'Fair Island.' This is a small island, lying midway between the Shetlands and Orkneys, about one mile broad by  $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles long, it is surrounded by a belt of precipitous cliffs and covered with heather, grass, stunted junipers, and on the lower ground there are a few small 'lochaws' and a little marsh ground. On this small area Mr. Eagle Clarke has come across within the space of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  years no less than 207 species of birds or 'about one half of the birds that have ever been known to have occurred in the British Isles. Of these, five species are recorded from our islands for the first time, while some species considered as rare stragglers have occurred on several occasions and in small numbers. What light do these facts throw on the general theory of migration? Here, perhaps, our author is a little disappointing. One might have hoped that with his practical knowledge of migration and his undoubted power of unravelling the tangled skein of the different routes taken by the same species which, at certain times of the year, are taking place simultaneously through Great Britain, some definite hypothesis might have been forthcoming which would have attempted to solve the large subject of migration in its general aspect.

Mr. Eagle Clark has decided otherwise and, perhaps, wisely. This book is, as set forth in the preface, merely a record of his own studies, no attempt has been made to investigate or criticize the work of others, which would have been essential were the subject treated in its more general aspect.

Many have rushed into print (or manuscript) from earliest times to the present day, giving to the world theories of migration, many of them of a somewhat wild and fantastic type, and if we are disappointed at the absence of hypothesis, we have at least the satisfaction of feeling that no mistakes have been made. At the

beginning of the first volume a short *résumé* of both old and modern views are included. Lists of British Birds are also given, classified according to their status as migrants, and further chapters on the Geographic Aspects of British Bird Migration and Weather Influences complete one of the most full and interesting accounts of Bird Migration in the British Isles that has hitherto been written.

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## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

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### BIRDS AND FRESH AIR.

SIR,—Since writing about the Blue Thrush, which improved so wonderfully in a short time by being in the fresh air, a sequel has proved yet more strikingly the truth that air means life. I parted with the bird in question to a home where he was kept indoors, in a room at a window which was not always open. He only lived a few months, and an autopsy showed that he died of consumption. I quite believe that he might have lived longer and remained in health had he been out of doors instead of in.

Another proof was exemplified by my Laughing Kingfishers, supposed to need much warmth. They enjoyed a cold frosty day thoroughly, and broke the ice (thin ice) in their bath for a bathe.

But I mentioned this in a notice on these birds—"Jack and Jill"—in a number of the Magazine in 1911.

K. CURREY.

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### HANGNEST EATING A MOUSE.

SIR,—On June 12th when feeding one of my Hangnests—the example figured in the volume for 1907—I discovered that a mouse had foolishly entered the small aviary compartment and had not only been killed by the Hangnest, but its head had been picked to pieces and devoured. I was aware that this bird was bloodthirsty from the fact that some years previously it had slaughtered one bird and seriously mauled a second in the adjoining compartment, but it was new to me to discover that it would devour what it had killed. Doubtless in their wild state the Hangnests do not confine their predatory assaults to insects, but also prey upon small vertebrates.

A. G. BUTLER.

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### BREEDING QUAILS.

I was much interested to see in the *Avicultural Magazine* that they had succeeded in breeding the Douglas Quail at the Zoo this season.

I have been similarly successful with the Venezuelan Quail (*squamata*)

and have also a troop of young from a Venezuelan cock and Californian hen. I believe that this is the first time they have been bred in England. These have been entirely raised by the parents, the cock in both instances doing most of the mothering. The hybrids look like making exceedingly handsome birds.

I thought that you might be interested to hear this.

WM. SHORE BAILY.

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#### EARLY IMPORTATION OF THE RUFFED LORY.

The following letter, received by Mr. SETH-SMITH is of considerable interest as it shows that the Ruffed Lory (*Calliptilus solitarius*) of Fiji, was actually brought alive to this country forty years ago. Dr. Bahr, it will be remembered, brought a pair of these most beautiful, though decidedly delicate, parrots home in 1911, (*Avic. Mag.*, December 1911), which were believed to be the first imported. A description of the birds was appended to the following letter, and leaves no doubt as to the identity of the species.

“DEAR SIR,—Noticing under the heading “Birds at the Zoo” in the *Morning Post* of Sept. 10th, mention of the Parrot Finches of Fiji, I am interested to know if they are of the same family as the little friends I succeeded in bringing from Fiji round Cape Horn alive to England, when Commander of H.M.S. “Clio” 40 years ago, being kept alive during their long voyage of some 15,000 miles by being housed in a cage protected by glass and warmed by hot-water bottles and ordinary night-lights; their food consisting of condensed milk and honey.

At the time to which I refer these birds were considered so rare that the Curator of the Sydney Gardens, N.S.W. did not even possess a pair and entreated me, instead of venturing on the attempt to take them all the way to England, to leave them in Australia. But I had visions of being able to execute the work taken in hand of conveying them home, and, possibly, one day seeing them ensconced in the Zoological Gardens; and, although I was successful as to the first, fate decreed disappointment as to the latter. One little bird succumbing during a snow-storm as the anchor was let go at Spit-head, and its companion shortly afterwards, by injury, received during my absence from home.

I have had many pets in my time. Humming Birds in the West Indies, Love Birds and Mousedeer in the Straits of Malacca, &c., but I consider the Fiji Parrakeets far away the most interesting. They were devotedly attached to one another and, if separated but for a moment, would screech till again together. This was particularly noticeable and amusing when occupying their sleeping chamber—a cocoanut shell suspended from top of their cage.

T. K. HUDSON, *Capt. R.N.*”

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BIRD NOTES FROM THE PERTH (WESTERN AUSTRALIA)  
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Writing to Mr. SETH-SMITH, under date June 1st, 1912, Mr. E. LE SOUËF, the Director of the Zoological Gardens at Perth, Western Australia, sends the following interesting notes:—

“Our Zoo. has made great strides since you saw it, and you would hardly recognise much of it now. We reared a lovely pair of Manchurian Cranes this season, which are now finer than their parents. We also have a fine collection of *Tantalus* in perfect feather and with the cris-cross black and white markings on the wings and rose-coloured rump. They make a lovely colour scheme. We reared many White Swans, Carolina Ducks and Variegated Sheldrakes. Our Emus are laying. Last year the Queen Alexandra Parrakeets laid, but other birds took their eggs, and the same thing happened to the Red-headed Cardinals.

We have a pair of large Indian Hornbills doing very well. They are in a large open aviary where they can fly round and hop from perch to perch, and they have improved out of all knowledge since their arrival.

We bred two strong young Macaws (*Ara macao*), but a dreadfully hot day killed them both when about ten days old. I think that the heat affected the old birds so much that they could not manage to feed their young.

Our Geese and ducks are well, and I am putting dried meat into their food, as the dry climate and poor sandy soil seems to prevent their breeding. Ducks, however, breed freely a few miles from here where the soil is of clay.

We have beautiful palms forty feet high bearing thousands of seeds, and all our trees are well-grown and very thick and suitable for birds, and the result is that Honey-eaters of several kinds breed in the Zoo. We feed them with honey and water suspended from the trees. We also have Fantails, Wag-tails, Zosterops, Chats, and many other birds as regular inhabitants of the Gardens.

We breed the Southern Stone Plover every year, and they run loose among the visitors and do not mind being lifted off their eggs.

We learnt a curious fact the other day, namely, that some of the Honey-eaters kill and eat smaller birds. Our Head-keeper saw a White-eyebrowed Honey-eater chase and kill a Silver-eye (*Zosterops*) and start to eat it. I suppose that it is need of animal food owing to insects being scarce here.

We counted eight hundred Black Swans, eighty Pelicans, and many hundreds of ducks on the Swan River the other day.”

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## THE SOCIETY'S BALANCE SHEET.

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One of the matters that arose for discussion at the Council Meeting in the summer was the question of printing the Balance Sheet and issuing it annually to Members, a practice which was formerly adopted but which has been discontinued for many years.

The Council, however, was of the opinion that it was unnecessary to incur the expense involved, unless there was a widely expressed feeling on the part of Members that it should be done. They decided, however, that a copy of the Balance Sheet should be kept by the Hon. Business Secretary at his office in the Zoological Gardens, and any Member of the Society who wished to see it could do so by giving the Secretary forty-eight hours notice of his intention to call.

R. I. POCOCK.

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## THE MEMBERS' DINNER.

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Members of the Society will recollect that a proposal to hold a Dinner in London after the Council Meeting at the end of January or the beginning of February has been under consideration. Since, however, Members cannot be expected to pledge themselves so long beforehand, the matter has been left in the hands of the Business Secretary who will make the necessary arrangements, provided a sufficient number of Members express their willingness to attend.

The date and other particulars of the proposed dinner will be announced in the January issue of the Magazine, and Members will then be invited to let the Secretary know if they wish to be present.

R. I. POCOCK,

*Hon. Business Secretary.*

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## PRACTICAL BIRD-KEEPING.

## XXI.—NOTES ON OUT-OF-THE-WAY BIRDS.

By FRANK FINN, B.A., F.Z.S.

Although we have heard a great deal about aviculture as a scientific study, the fact remains that the avicultural purview has so far remained very limited, and neither in private collections, bird-shows, or Zoological Gardens do we find any all-round representation of the many families of birds; yet, without this all-round representation, aviculture cannot be said to be scientific. The reason is, of course, that the ordinarily-kept families, such as passerine birds, parrots, doves, pheasants and ducks, are so much easier than the others that the temptation is to acquire good series of these and to consider that a rare *species* is a great acquisition, while neglecting a *family* which is seldom kept at all.

The rarer families of birds have, however, always had a great attraction for me; not only are they likely to be of more scientific interest, but they are often by their very unfamiliarity of form and ways, more pleasant to watch, while some species among them may be far easier subjects than many birds belonging to the more ordinary avicultural groups. For instance, for a bird which has the distinction of being the unique representative of its family, easy to keep, and interesting in its ways, we may refer to the Kagu (*Rhinocetus jubatus*) whose quaint and affable manners we have mostly admired at the Zoo. The first known egg of this species, by the way, was laid there many years ago—a triumph far greater than the modern breeding results we hear so much about.

I purpose here, then, to say something about members of rarely-kept families of which I have had personal experience, and I shall use my own experience as a peg on which to hang remarks or suggestions *re* the treatment of out-of-the-way birds which I have only seen kept by others, chiefly at various Zoos, which are not unfortunately, usually good schools for high-class scientific aviculture, though an absolute beginner may learn much there about the keeping of hardy unkillable stuff.

For a full account of what groups have been bred in captivity and their incubation periods, &c., I may refer to my book "The World's Birds."

Among perching birds, these families which are called in the less modern works "Picarian" (*i.e.* all perching birds other than Passerines and Parrots have always been my favourites), and when I went to India I was delighted with the commonness of Rollers, Bee-eaters, Woodpeckers, and Barbets, and soon set to work to acquire experience which might be of use to amateurs not so happily situated. I found that the young of that glorious creature the Indian Roller (*Coracias indica*)—always called Blue-Jay in India—were quite easily reared on cut-up raw meat and cockroaches; the cockroaches were very satisfying, being of the great American kind (*Periplaneta americana*) now thoroughly established in India. The same food also suited adults, which I have successfully "meated off," beginning with cockroaches with the heads pulled off, which leaves them helpless but kicking, then going on to small dead fish and shrimps, and finally proceeding to the raw meat.

Fish and shrimps are, of course, unnatural food for thorough land birds like these, but they take the place of lizards and large insects, and are suitable for all birds which eat these; Rollers especially need something with hard parts in it, to form their pellets, for like so many (though not all) insectivorous birds, they cast up the hard parts of their food like birds of prey. Rollers are not at all suited for cage-life—no birds which either sit still or fly are so, unless very small—and if they have to be confined in a cage at all this should be as long as possible and have only two perches, as mentioned in my remarks on transport. In aviaries they are charming, and the European species was bred successfully in 1901 by our member Mr. St. Quintin, the young birds being reared at first on insects, then on chopped-up raw rabbit (fur and all) and hard-boiled egg, which was the usual food of the old birds.

Rollers will devour any small bird they can swallow, and I have seen both the European and the Indian species at the Zoo greedily gulp down lettuce in large pieces. Chopped lettuce should therefore be supplied, and it is as well to dilute, as it were, chopped raw meat with biscuit-meal or dry-boiled rice. Suitable companions

for Rollers are other large insect-eaters and such birds as small Gulls, Plovers, and the Great Laughing Kingfishers (*Dacelo*).

Woodpeckers I never bothered much about, as they are better known in Europe than Rollers, but I reared, on cockroaches chiefly, the beautiful Golden-backed species (*Brachypternus aurantius*) which is the commonest over most of India, and the best Woodpecker I have seen in captivity. However, our own species are so good, that they quite sufficiently represent the family, and I hope some who have had experience with them will summarize their results with this family in the present series.

I never troubled to send any Rollers or Woodpeckers home, there being already European species available, for I made a rule, when sending birds for the Zoo, to avoid as far as possible representatives of groups already available either in nature or in the trade, holding that it is not the business of a scientific official to encourage stinginess or want of enterprise in scientific societies, or to interfere with the hard-earned livelihood of those much and unjustly abused individuals, our dealers.

For the same reason I had little to do with Barbets, the Blue-fronted (*Cyanops asiatica*) being already well-known when I went to India in 1894; but my experience with the Coppersmith or Crimson-breasted Barbet (*Xantholæma hematocephala*) may be worth recording, as it throws light on some recurrent avicultural problems. In the Marshalls' monograph of the *Capitonidæ* or Barbets will be found the statement that Barbets do not thrive in captivity, a statement that has been duly copied by other writers ignorant of aviculture. Now everyone knows that Barbets are easy subjects, treated as Mr. Townsend has recommended for Tanagers—in fact, the Blue-cheeked is one of the easiest soft-bills (the term is used technically, not literally, as all Barbets bite like fiends) one can keep; and I fancy that my friend the Coppersmith started the story. He is the commonest of Barbets, plying his miniature gong in the street trees in Calcutta; yet I was told he could not be kept. I thought the reason was that *sattoo*, the standard soft-bill food, did not suit him, and I found that adult birds could be meated off, or rather "fruited off" on banana, and live on that alone; young birds could also be reared on this simple diet, and I found that at any rate when

reared, bread-and-milk could be consumed with impunity. Since then, a few have reached England, and, though undoubtedly delicate compared with others, this charming Barbet is evidently not the impossible subject our native dealers supposed. Small blame to them—they were probably feeding birds on *sattoo* in the time of Alexanders' invasion, and I was not surprised that my success did not alter their methods—should the aviculture of ages be upset by a mushroom European? I, however, profited by the lesson and by the similar one I learnt in connection with the Cotton Teal (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) another impossible bird (of which I sent the first specimens home) and have since steadfastly refused to believe in the impossibility of keeping any bird. The Asiatic Barbets, by the way, are far more purely fruit-eaters and more unsociable than the two African species I have seen.

I have had some most interesting experiences with Cuckoos, an interesting group which are grossly neglected as a rule. The easiest of all is the Koel (*Eudynamis honorata*), which is a favourite cage-bird in Calcutta, and should be represented in any scientific collection. Being, unlike most Cuckoos, a fruit-eater, it is easily catered for. It is parasitic on crows, and a pair of tame jackdaws or magpies should make good fosterers for it. Being so common, and having been exhibited at home, I did not trouble about it, but more than once reared specimens of that fine non-parasitic cuckoo the Indian Coucal (*Centropus rufipennis*) locally known as the Crow-pheasant, a name much apter than it sounds. In habits and general form this species resembles a magpie, and can be reared on cut-up raw meat, snails, and cockroaches, and when grown allowed liberty about a garden. It is an enemy to any small bird it can catch, and will eat lizards and snakes. I had one loose which fed itself on toads and refuse boiled rice! This bird has been represented at the London Zoo, and ought always to be an view. Another non-parasitic cuckoo, the Guira or White Ani (*Guira guira*) of South America, has also been frequently imported, and has bred in this country. Like the Crow-pheasant, it is carnivorous.

I was lately shown a fine specimen of our common cuckoo, belonging to Mr. Harwood, the taxidermist, whose success as an aviculturist in keeping this bird (and in a thrush cage) till it has come

into full adult plumage), is as remarkable as his beautiful taxidermic work. The bird, it is useful to know, has been fed almost entirely on hard-boiled egg and mealworms, though of course, like most cuckoos, it greatly appreciates hairy caterpillars.

Trogans have never fallen to my personal lot, but the first one I ever knew to be kept in captivity since the time the ancient Aztecs kept the Quezal (*Pharomacrus mocinno*) for its feathers, was a specimen of the Indian Red-headed Trogon (*Harpactes erythrocephalus*) which we had in the Calcutta Zoo in my time. This was fed entirely on grasshoppers and cockroaches, and kept in a cage. I also recently saw again the first Trogon ever brought to England, the Cuban Trogon (*Prionotelus temnurus*) which was imported by Mr. Frost in 1907, and had been in Mr. Maxwell's hands. Other specimens have since been imported, and the Zoo have owned one and had two (I believe a pair) on deposit, but in neither case did the birds live a fourth as long as Mr. Maxwell's. Private individuals' birds must be expected to have an advantage in the fact that their owners have paid for them themselves; but the fact that no attempt was made to encourage the pair (?) exhibited to breed, or even to put them in an outdoor flight, shows how little science is regarded at the Zoo. The young stages of Trogons are almost unknown, and to have elucidated them would have been to win some of that respectful recognition from skin-ornithologists for which some of our aviculturists are continually hankering, as if the study of live birds were not infinitely the more scientific of the two, if people needs must specialise!

The only observation I have been able to make on captive Trogons is that they hop when moving on the ground, not waddling like Bee-eaters or most Kingfishers. I should recommend anyone keeping them to hang up bunches of grapes or berries in their aviary, as the fruit-eating forms, like the Cuban, which are the only ones we are likely to get yet awhile, dart out and pluck their fruit on the wing as if taking insects. They would need a covered nest-box, as they breed in holes, and though more active on their feet than many short-legged birds, are eminently not birds for small cages.

Kingfishers are very easily obtained in India, and I have hand-reared the common species—much commoner out there—the

beautiful Pied (*Ceryle rudis*) and the great Stork-billed (*Pelargopsis gaurial*); all Kingfishers are easily brought up if one has fish to give them and can stand the yells and smells they generate. When they are reared, however, the difficulty begins, as they knock themselves about in a cage, and in an aviary are generally too quarrelsome for even a pair to live together, though individuals of different species will do so. For aviculture, therefore, the best species are the well-known Laughing Jackass (*Dacelo gigantea*) and the Sacred Kingfisher (*Halcyon sancta*) both birds of which the pair will live together, and land-feeders, so that they will do well on raw meat, to which must be added such items of food as mealworms, mice, small fish, and large insects.

(*To be continued*).

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## SALE OF MONS. R. PAUWEL'S COLLECTION.

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The breaking up of the unique collection of foreign birds belonging to Mons. R. Pauwels, of Brabant, Belgium, is an event of some importance in the history of aviculture, for this was probably the finest private collection of rare living birds ever brought together. From the catalogue, which we understand has been sent to all the members of the Avicultural Society, there appears to be some three hundred foreign birds, mostly of very rare specie, for disposal, amongst which may be mentioned Pileated and Bourke's Parrakeets, Stella Lories, Blue Budgerigars, Tri-coloured and Fiji Parrot-Finches; rare Fruit-Pigeons, Touracous, Sugar-birds, Sun-birds, Tanagers, Woodpeckers, Orioles and Fruit-suckers.

The collection of Paradise Birds, with the exception of a Twelve-wired and two Count Raggi's Birds, have been sold to various Continental Zoological Gardens.

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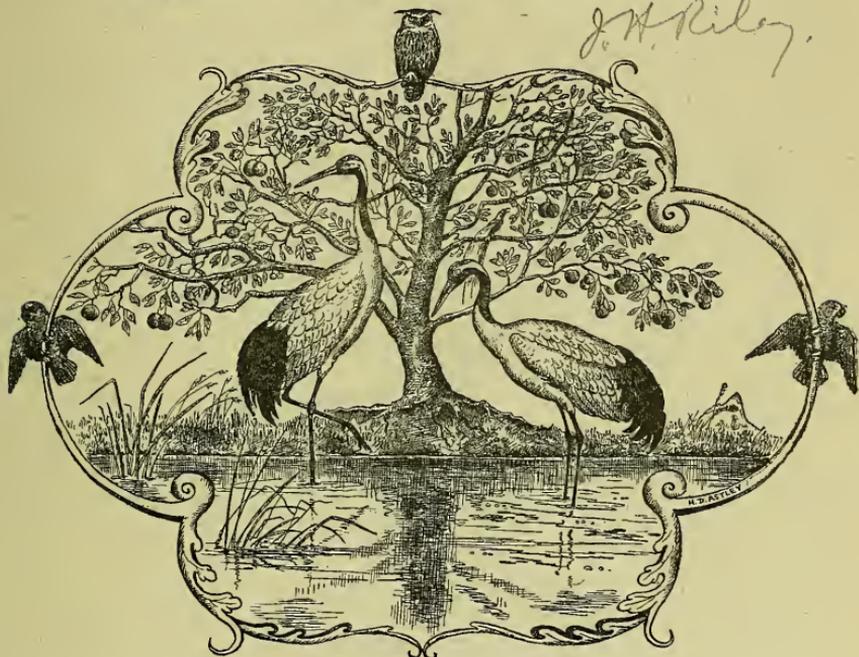
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SUCCESSFUL BREEDING OF THE  
GRAND ECLECTUS PARROT.

By MISS DRUMMOND.

My attempt to breed the Grand Eclectus Parrot has gone on for three years. The pair have had four nests, but the eggs have all been clear, except last year, when one hatched out, but owing to a badly-constructed log the chick fell out and was killed at about three weeks old, probably caught in the hen's wing. However, fortune has turned, and I have now two well-grown, well-feathered young ones—male and female—feeding themselves and flying in and out of the flight when the window is opened on fine days. It is, I suppose, being lighter than the old birds that they use their wings so much, the old ones generally only scramble from one end of their aviary to the other.

The eggs are white, about the size of a large walnut, and there are always two. Incubation lasts 30 days, during which time the hen seldom comes out of the log, and is fed almost entirely by the male.

These young ones were hatched about July 21st, and came out of the log on October 9th, returning to sleep there for the first ten days. While in the log the hen fed them entirely for the first month, as, during incubation, the hen was almost entirely fed by the cock. Then she fed herself, as well as receiving from the cock, and a large amount of food was consumed by both birds, viz.: boiled Indian corn damp, Osborne biscuit made into sop, with a little Mellins' food made with boiled milk, and either baked rice-pudding or boiled potato, besides the usual seed, two or three apples, chickweed and lettuce and a few nuts. The green food I thought most

necessary, as the more they had of it the more they seemed to eat of the other foods, which was most important, as the young birds for the first two months never seemed satisfied, and the noise they made when hungry, as they generally seemed to be, was more like young puppies than birds.

The log—18in. by 20in.—is a piece of a trunk of a tree bored out. It was rather dark, which made it very difficult to watch the growth of the plumage; besides which the hen always returned whenever she saw anyone looking in; but on August 20th I saw grey down on wings and part of the head, the rest was quite bare. On 31st, a red tinge on one head. Sept. 2nd I noticed red and green feathers showing on the two tails and down on wings and a little on the back. Sept. 9th, tail-feathers much larger and a tinge of colour in wings; backs quite covered with down. They were very lively, making dabs and rushes at one's hand. By Sept. 18th the young male's head was quite feathered, and there were a good many feathers on the chest, but the back was still unfeathered. The hen was longer in feathering, and for some time after the male's head was quite green, she had only a red fringe over the eyes, the rest grey down; yet she got her tail-feathers first, and I thought her the oldest. On and after October 1st they came out occasionally on the platform in front of the log, but if anyone came into the aviary this most careful mother would push the young back. When they were outside I first noticed the male bird feeding them, and they used to follow him for food, after they came out altogether, which after a few days seemed to annoy the female and she became very cross towards the male and the young one, so on the 20th I had to cage her. He continued feeding for another week, but has now given it up and they feed themselves principally on seed, but I have not quite given up the Indian corn.

The beaks are not yet their proper colour, the young male's being a very dusky orange with red tip, the female's a very dingy black; the eyes have always been the same as those of the old birds as far as I could see. I should add that the old birds are tame and very clever and devoted to those they know. The male bird says a few words.

I am afraid I have written at much too great length, but I am told that the Eclectus has not been bred before in Great Britain.

**BREEDING OF THE HOODED SISKIN.***Chrysomitris cucullata.*

By Dr. M. AMSLER.

In March 1909, I bought a pair of these charming birds from a fellow aviculturist; they arrived quite lively and well, but the cock, as I had been warned, was "a trifle thick as he had not quite finished his moult." As a matter of fact this was his normal condition, for he was never as slim and tight in feather as his neat little mate. This pair spent the warmer nine months of 1909, 1910, and 1911 in an open aviary with plenty of opportunities for nesting, but, although they were obviously on very good terms and never far from each other, we got no further than volumes of sweet music from the male, and once I think an attempt on the part of the female to build a nest; on the latter point, however, I am uncertain as there was a very mixed collection in the aviary at that time.

The whole of last winter, the cock, who was obviously aged, was very puffy and asthmatical, and as spring approached and his condition did not improve I took the opportunity when in Bordeaux of buying two cocks in perfect condition and feather, which I brought back to England. On my arrival, I found as I expected, that the old cock had departed this life, and I, therefore, introduced one of the new comers to my hen. As I have this year changed my house and have had to build new aviaries the birds were not turned out until July 7th.

The Siskins shared the aviary with Gouldian Finches, Ruficaudas, Avadavats, and other Waxbills. Almost the first day I noticed the hen carrying, but nothing more happened and my hopes fell again to zero, for I could picture one of Mr. Hubert Astley's beautiful little hens busy at work and robbing us of the medal. In the middle of July the hen was moulting, but the cock was still in perfect feather and very attentive to his spouse, regularly feeding her from the crop. On August 24th, I again noticed the hen carrying bits of felt which I had given the Avadavats as a lining for their nest. She was continually going in and out of a nest-box hung up near the roof of the shelter, but she always emerged with the nesting material still in her bill and, therefore, got no "forrader." The

following day I examined the nest-box and found nothing in it, so I placed an old Chaffinch's nest firmly in the box, and hoped our friend would line and make use of this. She was, however, very indignant at my interference and began pulling the nest to pieces.

On the 26th of August I found she had taken possession of a nest-box previously used and lined by my *Ruficaudas*. This box was fortunately low down, about five feet from the ground and was open at one end, so that one could easily see into the nest. A very neat cup-shaped nest was built in thirty-six hours, of hay and cocoa-nut fibre, lined with felt and feathers. The hen began to sit at once, but no egg was laid until August 30th. The full clutch consisted of four eggs, which were laid on consecutive days; they were of the faintest possible pink colour with very minute brown spots at the broad end. Size: 16 mm. by 10 mm.

The male bird took no part in building or incubation, but was always near the nest and ready to feed his mate when she came off. The latter was a model sitter and I only saw her off the nest two or three times during the whole incubation period.

On Sept. 13th (a Friday to wit) the first and only chick was hatched, the other three eggs proving clear; it was quite naked and of an orange-brown colour. On the 15th, I peeped into the nest and saw a distinct increase in size, and a crop which was bulging with food. I think this consisted of sponge cake and maw seed; in fact, I believe the chick was reared on these two foods (of which large quantities disappeared) and green food such as groundsel and flowering grass. Here, again, the cock took no direct or active part, although he was always ready to feed the hen when she left the nest. After three or four days, however, she seemed to have no further craving for pre-digested food and always took her fill of maw seed and sometimes a little hemp as soon as the food supply was given out in the morning.

On Sept. 21st, I heard the chick calling for food, and again on the 24th, this time at a distance of twenty yards from the nest; on this date I again looked into the nest, the three clear eggs were still there and the chick was now a dark-brown colour and showing feather. On Sept. 26th, the orange-brown cross bars on the wings were clearly discernable.

On Sept. 29th (Sunday) I found the youngster sitting on the edge of the nest, and later, at 4 p.m. he was squatting on the ground. The weather was atrocious—floods of rain and a falling glass—so fearing the chick would perhaps roost outside and be drowned, I did a somewhat risky thing and caught both him and his mother, caged them, and left the cage in the aviary so that the hen should not miss her mate. Neither of the birds, however, seemed to mind my interference, so on the following day I brought the cage indoors, where the birds would be protected from the night fogs which we get here in the autumn. The male seemed none the worse for his enforced celibacy, but I often heard him calling to the hen, who, I believe, answered him, though at a distance of quite thirty yards.

On Oct. 1st I saw the chick fed by his mother on several occasions, and he also picked up and ate sponge cake himself.

The following are my notes of his colour at this date:—Beak dark horn colour; irides dark brown or black; forehead, head, and nape ashy brown; back and rump rufous brown; chin, chest and underparts crimson brown; primaries dark brown with grey tips; secondaries similar, but having the outer web an orange brown colour for a distance of half-an-inch from their bases. Scapulars dark-brown tipped with orange-brown; wing coverts brown, tipped with light brown; tail dark brown; feet and legs flesh colour.

On Oct. 3rd the chick was again seen feeding, and on Oct. 4th could crack hard seeds and was flying strongly.

On Oct. 6th I caught up the cock and caged him together with the hen and young Siskin. He behaved very well, and occasionally relieved the hen by feeding the youngster. It is interesting to note that he must have recognised his offspring, from whom he had been separated for a week and whom he had only seen for an hour or two after it left the nest, for I feel almost certain that he never looked into the nest before the chick flew. At the age of five weeks the sex of the young bird was evident and I was disappointed to find that it was a male—first the feathers on the chin and a few days latter those on the forehead and occiput began to assume an ashy-black colour. On October 25th I heard him attempting to sing, the “song” resembled the sound made by rubbing a wet bottle with

a cork and has, up to the present, only been repeated on two or three occasions.

At the time of writing (November 7th) there is no trace of scarlet in the young bird's plumage, and the black-cap and bib are still very imperfect. The general colour is a cinnamon brown with dark flights and tail and he is quite strong and independent of his parents, although at nights he usually roosts between them.

I propose sending further notes on the changes of plumage at a latter date, but have written the foregoing account in compliance with the Society's rule that nesting notes should be sent in eight weeks from the date of hatching the young.

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## BREEDING NOTES FOR 1912.

By W. H. ST. QUINTIN, F.Z.S.

The breeding season of 1912 will probably be long remembered by most aviculturists as one full of disappointment. Besides the never-ending rain, the absence of sun, and consequent low temperature, was most unfavourable to young things of all sorts.

I began well by rearing five young Ravens. The old pair brought up two last year and five the season before that, always making a huge nest of boughs and twigs on a wine hamper lid fixed up in a corner of their aviary, and lining it with moss and sods of soft grass.

My Giant Kingfishers brought up two fine young birds, hatching on the 17th May. Mr. Cosgrave has given a full account of the successful rearing of a young bird of this species at Lilford last year, so I need not give my experience, which confirms his. In my case, both parents were most devoted, and by hard work managed to keep the enormous appetites of their young family satisfied.

A pair of Madagascar Hemipodes, put into an outdoor aviary on April 26th, at once went to nest and reared two young from their three eggs. We made out the period of incubation to be 14 days. As there was no other male available, the hen bird was unable to gratify her polyandrous instincts, and, to my surprise, showed a

good deal of interest in the chicks, offering them food and showing anxiety when we entered the aviary. But the young always stuck close to their father and I never saw them brooded by the female. The chicks were luckily kept by the male most of the time under the light of a large garden frame which was fixed near the ground in a sloping position, supported on loose bricks. I recommend this as a good way of keeping a piece of ground dry for such birds, even in wet weather, without obstructing light.

Four American Blue-birds were partly reared (all males), but after they had left the nest, and had just begun to feed themselves, they and the mother became affected with "gapes," and the young died.

My Australian Cranes laid eggs (two clutches), but the female is, I think, scarcely adult, and never showed the slightest interest in them; and the male, on each occasion, after sitting steadily for about two days, apparently concluded that to incubate for so many weeks, in such a summer, was not to be undertaken single-handed, and, losing patience, he broke and sucked the beautiful eggs.

Of the nine young Cabot's Tragopans half-reared, only one remains. They were treated exactly in the way that usually answers perfectly. But the incessant damp and chilly weather was too much for them, and one after another they drooped and died. And the same with some chicks of Sonnerat's Jungle-fowl, we lost the first brood. But in July the hen went to nest again, and though so late in the season, by rearing entirely in a dry shed upon peat moss, and supplying insect food by hand, we have managed to get two fine young birds up. A young Impeyan, being reared by the parents, also died one excessively wet night, when the size of a partridge. As with our Game-birds in a bad season, the time when the young have grown too large to be easily brooded by the parents, is very critical. They miss the protection of the plumage of the mother bird, their own feathers being soft and their covering not complete, and they cannot stand much exposure.

But my great disappointment remains to be told. I have more than once had young of the Little Bustard hatched, but the chicks have never lived more than a few days, chiefly owing to the nervousness and excitability of the mother, whose one idea was to

draw the young away when attempts were made to supplement the failing supply of natural food in their enclosure.

But this year, a female bird which went to nest, was extremely tame, and even allowed us to put up the light belonging to a small garden frame over her as she sat, so that the nest remained dry all the miserable weather which we had in Yorkshire at that time. Probably owing to the low temperature and absence of sun the bird had gone to nest unusually late, and it was not till the 18th July, after the usual incubation of 20—21 days, that the two eggs were hatched.

At first the chicks were tender and weak on their legs, and wandered a very little way for some days; and the mother with much discretion took them to sleep under the light which still remained over the nest. At this time the daily maximum ranged from 57 to 65, with minimum to 48, while rain fell at short intervals and there was a total absence of sun. Of course all this was most unfavourable to young birds of this class, accustomed to almost incessant sun and a dry climate in their breeding-haunts.

We kept the birds very quiet, as they got so wet in the long grass, when they crept away to hide: but gentles and wasp-grubs were thrown down within their reach several times a day. On July 22nd I saw the old birds pick up something and call to the young, who ran up from a distance of two or three yards to take the food from her bill, and once I saw her take a gentle about the same distance to the young, who kept close to some thick tufts of grass. The little birds also were just beginning to pick up food themselves in spite of the weather, they seemed doing well. I had to leave home then till the 27th, when I found that one chick had succumbed. They had grown fast, and no doubt the mother could not cover them both so well as when they were first hatched. On the 3rd August, the survivor was feathering, but it seemed sluggish, no doubt from cold (the thermometer on the grass had fallen to 33 the previous night) and the mother had given up trying to brood it. It died later that day, and nothing remained but to send it up to the Nat. Hist. Museum as a specimen. I think in anything like an ordinary season we should have reared these birds.

Young of Chilian and Chestnut-breasted Teal were reared, as

well as various species of more ordinary waterfowl; but the inclement season seemed to affect even these birds, for I never knew so many unfertile eggs laid.

An otter, passing through my enclosure one night in March, killed two valuable birds, a Versicolor and a Cinnamon Teal, both drakes. It is not the first time that this has happened; one spring an otter broke up five pairs of ducks of different species in one "raid." They are hard to keep out, and not the least provoking part of it is that it is pure mischief that prompts the act, for the otter seldom eats the birds, but contents himself with crushing their bodies with his powerful jaws, apparently seizing them from below, while swimming under water.

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## EVIDENCE AFFORDED BY CAPTIVE BIRDS.

By Dr. ARTHUR G. BUTLER.

In an article by W. L. McAtee, published in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia for June, 1912, entitled "The experimental method of testing the efficiency of warning and cryptic coloration in protecting Animals from enemies" the author argues that the evidence brought forward in support of the theory of protective coloration in animals by the students of animals in captivity is altogether unsound, inasmuch as it has been proved by a wholesale examination of the stomachs of wild animals that their natural tastes differ considerably from those of captive animals: he says with regard to information on the natural food habits of birds contained in the United States Biological Survey "They comprise detailed informations of the contents of more than 48,000 bird stomachs representing all families of birds and collected in hundreds of localities in the United States at all seasons. The United States has a goodly representation of butterflies, yet only five of these 48,000 stomachs contained remains of Rhopalocera. It is hoped this will be more satisfactory to the selectionists than the "negative evidence" they are accustomed to cite with contempt."

Whereas I have always maintained that a great deal too much stress has been laid upon the importance of evidence afforded by the acceptance or rejection of certain forms of living food by animals in captivity and have always expressed my entire disbelief in the theory of warning colours, that disbelief being itself based upon the study of my own birds during the past thirty years, I think Mr. McAtee goes too far in assuming that the numerous experiments made by many observers with reference to protection are utterly valueless.

It is doubtless true that wild birds, which are able to hunt for food over large tracts of country, naturally prey upon those creatures for which they have a decided preference whenever the latter are obtainable; but in seasons of drought, when their favourite food is scarce, they undoubtedly pursue and devour what they can get provided that it is not utterly distasteful; thus last year, when we had an unusually long dry hot summer, I repeatedly saw the common House-Sparrow chasing and devouring all three species of our common white butterflies:—*Ganoris brassicæ*, *rapæ*, and *napi*, the wings of which they snipped off before eating the bodies. That many birds do eat butterflies in their wild state is proved by the numbers sent home from abroad with triangular gaps cleanly snipped out of their wings evidently by the beak of a pursuing bird.

To assume that captive birds accept certain food which they would never look at in an unconfined state is to beg the question: a hungry bird would probably accept it eagerly, just as a hungry bird would certainly examine a leaf-like butterfly or a stick-like caterpillar if it came across it while searching for insect food upon a tree or shrub; in cases of that kind the legs and perhaps the antennæ of the butterfly would be noticed and the short true legs or prolegs of the caterpillar would probably attract attention: this would induce the bird to test the character of the mimetic form with its beak and, if palatable, it would undoubtedly be devoured: a study of living birds in flight-cage and aviary enables us to be sure of this.

I have never known any captive bird to exhibit fear of what are called warning colours in insects; they sometimes ignore certain startlingly coloured insects altogether and at other times they peck at and either accept or reject them. It is true that anything very

bizarre in form and coloration renders those birds which are not accustomed to it extremely cautious in their approach; they stand on tip-toe with neck lengthened, run round it in a circle, peck and spring back; if they actually feared it they would neither approach nor peck. As for terrifying attitudes in caterpillars, I am certain that no insectivorous animal pays the least attention to them, so if the unfortunate creatures think that the assumption of the line of beauty looks frightful they must be greatly deluded.

On the other hand, although insects which at one time are rejected by birds sometimes become acceptable when subsequently tried, it does not follow that a wild bird which had rejected an insect that offended its taste would test its flavour a second or third time and eventually develop a liking for it; it is far more probable that having once found it nauseous, it would subsequently ignore it utterly. A confiding bird naturally tests, and either accepts or rejects what its owner offers it, but it would not be likely to select what it had already proved to be unpleasing when other and palatable food was to be obtained with equal ease.

If the larvæ of any insect were entirely protected from all insectivorous animals by form or colouring, they would undoubtedly become so abundant as to be a scourge: if the larvæ of *Cerura* and its allies were not eagerly accepted and devoured by the Titmice, they might have become as great a nuisance, as the caterpillars of the currant-moth *Abraxas* and its allies, which are generally rejected by insectivorous animals; but even *A. grossulariata*, which spiders will not approach but cut out of their web as they often do wasps, is not invariably refused by foreign birds in captivity, though for all we know to the contrary it may generally be by birds in freedom.

Metallic colours seem to be attractive to birds and in an aviary they never hesitate for a moment to chase and devour the most metallic of our British moths (*Plusia chrysitis*), nor do they hesitate to peck, if they do not invariably devour, chrysalides of *Vanessa urticæ* with its metallic decorations.

Birds both wild and in aviaries are eager for spiders and devour them in considerable numbers. I have seen a wild bird hover in front of the web of *Epeira diademata* and pluck the little animal from the middle of its home; this in itself tends to prove that the mere

fact of partial confinement does not entirely obliterate a bird's preferences in the matter of food.

There is a tendency in the minds of exclusively indoor Zoologists to decry the value of the work done by aviarists and curators of Zoological Gardens : they assert that the animals observed being more or less limited to a comparatively small area, do not behave as they would in a wild state, and consequently all observations recorded must be wholly untrustworthy. Do birds in an aviary alter their entire method of nidification? As a rule we know that they do not ; and when they do, it is because reason shows them that some other method is more advantageous under existing circumstances : indeed, as I have previously stated, centuries of cage life have not obliterated from the minds of the Bengalee and Canary the pattern of the nest which their remote ancestors used to build when at liberty, and in an aviary containing shrubs these birds construct their typical nests to-day.

Of course, in order to ascertain the favourite food of any wild animal an examination of the stomachs of numerous free examples is by far the better way ; but nevertheless a study of the evident preferences shown in captivity is not altogether valueless. All evidence should be accepted with caution, and the testimony of many workers in various lands should be carefully studied and thought over before any conclusions are come to, and it should always be borne in mind that "*Natura non facit saltum*" is a rule rarely broken and the development of so-called mimetic forms must have been an exceedingly slow process, much more so than if insectivorous animals actually cared a brass farthing what colour was presented to them, or what attitude a caterpillar assumed when at rest or startled. Brightly coloured caterpillars are generally severely pecked even when subsequently rejected, so that their coloration does not preserve life unless it puts birds upon their guard against interfering with similarly coloured examples ; to some extent it may be so, though I am inclined to think that smell is a more potent deterrent than any arrangement of colours, and undoubtedly some brightly-coloured caterpillars are rejected by certain birds, though not by all, because they are hairy ; yet the perfect insects evolved from them

are eaten without hesitation, so that one cannot quite see where the species is benefited.

In fine, whatever bias we have, let us not jump to hasty conclusions, but calmly consider all evidence from every possible point of view ; and, for our own sakes if for no other, never attribute to the lower animals the same dreads and preferences which we ourselves possess.

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## THE PLUMAGE QUESTION AND AVICULTURE.

By J. LEWIS BONHOTE, M.A.

In the August number of *Tropical Life* there appeared an article entitled "Economic Zoology—a Neglected Industry," which dealt chiefly with the possibilities of farming the Egrets for the sake of their plumes. As the subject is closely connected with Aviculture, we may perhaps be excused for bringing it to the notice of our readers. With regard to the procuring of the plumes of wild birds for the adornment of ladies' hats, certain facts are indisputable. Firstly, the trade involves the serious diminution or extermination of many of the most beautiful species that nature has evolved, and secondly, this destruction has been carried on in a manner which involves no little cruelty to the innocent victims of the appetite for adornment. To put a stop to these undoubted evils, societies and private individuals in various parts of the world have attempted, and in some cases, succeeded in passing laws ensuring absolute protection to the birds. This has led to serious dissatisfaction among members of the Plume Trade and others interested in this traffic, as well as from Agriculturists, who are finding their crops ravaged by harmful and non-ornamental species.

It must be acknowledged that the laws, so far passed, have had little or no effect in stopping the trade ; most species of birds naturally shun the advance of civilisation and it is, as the protectionists themselves acknowledge, practically impossible to enforce any laws in the remoter parts of the world.

Looking at the matter from the standpoint of a perfectly

unbiased observer, have the protectionists any right to dictate to the rest of the world what may or may not be killed? Wild nature is common property, and the non-protectionists have equal rights with those whose pleasure is merely to watch nature or to enjoy a satisfaction in knowing that it exists unharmed.

On the other hand, those whose business leads to the destruction of these beautiful creatures must remember that others have rights as well as themselves, and that they are only entitled to take the interest and not the capital, so that if they will not restrain their hands from deliberate extermination, strong laws must be passed against them. The cruelty aspect offers, of course, no argument—civilisation sets its face against cruelty of any sort even to the humblest of creatures, and while recognising the full rights of man to take to his own use a percentage of Nature's abundance, the trade would, we feel sure, be the first to put down any cruel methods, were they approached in a reasonable and not in an aggressive spirit.

For every product of life Man is dependent on Nature, were the Prohibition doctrine carried out to its logical conclusion, Man would at once cease to exist and were this law "Thou shall not kill" pushed still further, life of all kinds would cease except, perhaps, for the lowest organisms which find their nutriment from the chemical compounds in the earth and the rain.

This is the logical *reductio ad absurdum* of an entirely prohibitive policy, and we must thus accept the inevitable Law of Nature that Man has a right in common with all living things to take from Nature what he can get.

Man, however, from his high brain development has the power of storing, bartering and exchanging, so that his toll from Nature is not directly limited, as in the case of other animals, by his own immediate needs. It therefore becomes necessary for laws to be passed to regulate the yearly toll which may be taken from Nature so that future generations may still find food, adornment or an æsthetic enjoyment.

As ages roll on, however, Man has enormously increased both in numbers and in his needs for life—the rough fare and primitive clothing of savage tribes are not sufficient for civilised man and *pari*

*passu* with this increase, Man has encroached on Wild Nature restricting her boundaries and reducing her numbers.

Such a state of affairs could not long exist, the toll taken from Nature would eventually have become so small that Man himself would have been in danger of starvation. The question was solved, however, by the domestication of certain wild species. These being under the entire control of Man were, in the first place, protected from their natural enemies, and thus a larger surplus was available for the needs of Man, who has also increased their fertility, and ensured for himself an unlimited food supply.

In other cases, by the regulation of "close times," destruction of natural enemies, etc., the nominal increase of many wild species has been greatly augmented and turned to Man's advantage, without to any appreciable extent interfering with the balance of Nature, and even in the case of the plume trade we have the Ostrich, which has undoubtedly been saved from extermination by domestication.

Surely, therefore, the only logical and fair method of dealing with the Plumage Question in which, as we have tried to show, both parties have rights, is by attempting to farm, either in a wild state (as is done in the case of Plovers, Partridges, Foxes, etc.) or in a state of domestication (as is done with Ostriches, Peafowl, etc.) those species whose plumes are the most valuable and to regulate the destruction and sale of other species with whom the above methods are not practical.

Why has this method, so universal with other animals and plants, not been attempted? There are two main reasons. Firstly the world is wide, birds are numerous and a large toll can be exacted for many years before the result of that suicidal destruction becomes obvious, more especially as it is taking place in the remoter parts of the world. Secondly, to "farm" any species successfully it must be carefully studied, both in its wild state as well as in confinement, and hitherto no attempt has been made or money forthcoming to enable such an enquiry to be undertaken with even a single species. A French firm has made a beginning by offering a prize of £400 for the first Osprey (Egret) farm established on French territory, but a sum much greater than that would be required to carry out the necessary observations and then stock a farm with any chance of success.

That the matter is possible we do not doubt for a single instant. Under favourable conditions Egrets can be bred in confinement, and the taking of plumes from captive birds is an easy matter. Unfortunately they are large eaters, feeding on fish and other aquatic animals, so that their keep would be an expensive matter, yet in a suitable environment it should not be impossible to farm them on an economic basis.

Birds of Paradise offer, perhaps, a more difficult problem, but we now know, through Aviculture, that they are fairly hardy in confinement and Sir Wm. Ingram has shown us that they will thrive wild in other quarters of the Globe, where they could be much more easily farmed and protected than in their native haunts, so that if due attention was bestowed on them their case need be by no means hopeless.

We must bear in mind that the destruction of these birds is, as matters stand at present, only a matter of time and that then the profit from much of the Plume Trade is gone. Can we not appeal to the Trade before it is too late, to carry out a thorough investigation on these lines which, we feel sure, would in the future repay them a thousand-fold, and thus do away with these futile attempts at legislation and counter legislation which entirely fail to reach the root of the matter.

Here is also a chance for Aviculture to show its practical use and at the same time to keep the trade open for its own necessities. Prohibitive legislation is already beginning in certain countries, *e.g.* America and France, to suck at Avicultural life blood, putting back the progress of science and denying to many the pleasure and knowledge to be derived from the keeping of the birds, to which also plume wearers and bird keepers have equal, but *not greatér*, rights than the most rabid of protectionists.

Let us, therefore, honestly attempt to solve this question by the method that has hitherto been applied successfully to other cognate cases and in a manner fair and satisfactory to plume lovers, the trade, the protectionists, and lastly, but by no means least, to those species which we are morally bound to leave in undiminished numbers for the enjoyment of future generations.

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## NOTICE OF NEW BOOKS, &c.

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### HOW TO ATTRACT AND PROTECT WILD BIRDS.\*

This little book by Martin Hiesemann, describing Baron von Berlepsch's system of attracting and protecting birds by means of the provision of suitable nesting boxes, nesting sites, and feeding, first made its appearance in 1909, when a notice of it appeared in this journal (*Vol. VI., second series, page 313*). So well has it been received that now a third edition, which has been brought up to date and enlarged, has appeared. The subject is so fascinating and the results of the methods described so encouraging that all who are interested in our wild birds would do well to read it carefully.

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## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

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### NESTING OF THE HOODED PARRAKEET.

SIR,—I think I ought to let you know a success which ended with a disappointment with my Hooded Parrakeets (*Psephotus cucullatus*).

I had kept two pairs of these beautiful birds several years without any signs of nesting becoming apparent. One pair lived several years during the summer in a large aviary in which there is a large hawthorn tree.

In spring, when the tree was full of white flowers, the beautiful blue, yellow, black and green birds made a delightful show. But here the joy ended. They lived mostly hidden in the thick foliage and the only thing they did was to disturb the nests of the little Picui Doves that live in the same aviary.

Last spring I thought I would give the Picui Doves a change of nesting with success, and put the parrakeets in another aviary in which there was an enclosed part with glass in front. In this closed part a nesting box was put. During spring and summer the birds lived their usual retired life, but in September they began to get very lively, flying about restlessly. Towards the 15th of the month the female was found to be wanting. The nesting box was examined and there she was found sitting on four eggs.

Towards the end of October the young ones could be heard and hopes of a success was high. The cold wet weather became worse and worse and about

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\* *How to Attract and Protect Wild Birds*, by MARTIN HIESEMANN, translated by Emma S. Buchheim, with an introduction by Her Grace the Duchess of Bedford.

London : WITHERBY & CO., 326, High Holborn, W.C. Price 1/6.

the end of October it was discovered that the old birds did no longer go into the nesting box. The box was examined and five beautiful young birds were found dead in it. They had their crops full of food so that it must have been the cold that killed them. The feathers were just beginning to grow.

T. E. BLAAUW.

[An account of the successful breeding of *Psephotus cucullatus* has been received from Mr. Hubert D. Astley, and will appear in our next number.—ED.]

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## PRACTICAL BIRD-KEEPING.

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### XXI.—NOTES ON OUT-OF-THE-WAY BIRDS.

By FRANK FINN, B.A., F.Z.S.

(*Concluded from page 43*).

From the point of view of a very large proportion of aviculturists who must perforce be content with small accommodation, the most desirable group of the Picarians or non-passerine perchers is the family of Humming-birds; while hardly any family surpasses them in intrinsic interest, owing to their tiny size in so many cases, their frequently wonderful colours, and their pre-eminent adaptation to flight. This would at first seem to put them out of court for most aviculturists, but the fact is, that their speciality in flight is rather active evolutions in a small space than remaining long on the wing, which they do not do, according to those who have observed them wild. This facility in circumscribed flight could have been studied with great advantage in the case of a pair of Prevost's Hummer (*Lampornis prevosti*), which, alone out of a consignment of eighteen humming-birds of different species, succeeded in surviving a month at the Zoo in 1908. The male, indeed, lived five weeks—I remember this well, because I promised the keeper a shilling for every bird he kept over the month, and much regretted I had only this individual to pay for. He also grew a tail during his captivity here, showing that he was not nearly "on his last legs" constitutionally. In fact, as only three of this species were in the consignment it is pretty obvious that Prevost's Hummer is fairly hardy as Hummers go, and I should recommend anyone who has access to Venezuela to

specialize on this species if he wants to get Humming-birds over alive.

It must be remembered in keeping Hummers that they have very little use of their feet except as grasping organs ; I never saw any of the Zoo specimens try to walk or hop if they found themselves on the ground, and even in moving along their perch they whizz the wings. Newly-imported specimens, therefore, should have their perches so arranged that they can sidle along them to get at the food and water—for they drink freely though living on syrup. Once they are well-established and flying strongly the fewer perches the better. Of course these should be often cleaned, as the birds have a curious trick of grasping their long thin bills with their feet and wiping them down, any stickiness thereby accruing being promptly transferred to the perch, of course. For bathing the Prevosts' preferred a large leaf which had been sprayed on—no doubt a natural habit—but would also use a pan with a piece of moss in it. The cock took no notice of the hen except to pull her off the wet leaf by the scruff of the neck when he wanted a bath, and they kept as far apart as possible, so that solitary confinement would seem to be no hardship for a Humming-bird. A very high temperature is necessary, at any rate for newly-imported birds, as they become torpid like reptiles or very young nestlings if the temperature falls too low. This, however, seems to do them no harm ; a female Ruby-and-Topaz Hummer (*Chrysolampis moschitus*) in this consignment, arriving torpid, was placed on the hot water pipes for resuscitation, revived suddenly, flew all over the house for a long time without striking the glass, fell down on a Marmosets' cage, was rescued from the clutches of a Marmoset which had grabbed its head, and about a quarter of an hour later was hovering in its glass-sided case, apparently trying to peep into the lens of a camera which was being operated in front ! Surely so robust a minikin ought to have lived longer than it did ; the tameness it showed was characteristic of the group, which excel in this lovable and desirable peculiarity.

Provided they can be kept warm and *clean* (a most important point), the chief difficulty with these birds is evidently the provision of suitable food ; but as this has been got over with the Sunbirds (*Nectariniidæ*), which belong to an entirely different group, being

true Passerines, we need not despair of seeing Humming-birds also more commonly and successfully kept sooner or later. It is true that Sunbirds hop about in the normal way, and are not quite so sensitive to cold, apparently, but that they were not easy to begin with the following experiences of mine may show.

In 1897, I started from Calcutta with twelve Amethyst-rumped Sunbirds (*Arachnechthra zeylonica*), a selected lot—for to avoid useless waste of life I had liberated at least as many, which did not look like doing well—and one Purple (*A. asiatica*), the only one I could get, and in moult at that. Although I arrived home about midsummer, all the Amethysts died *en route*—the last in the train going up to London—evidently from cold; the one Purple reached the Zoo, and lived there about a fortnight only, though treated with every care by that excellent former keeper of the Insect-House, Quantrill.

So far as I know, these were the first Sunbirds to reach England, or Europe for that matter; and had I argued as some people do about Humming-birds, I should have said that Sunbirds were not worth trying with again.

The subsequent experiences of others, especially of Mr. A. Ezra, have shown, however, that even the delicate Amethyst can be shown and moulted successfully; while the Purple, which has confirmed my scanty experience by proving much the hardier, can not only be so treated, but has been kept by a dealer (Mr. J. D. Hamlyn) in numbers in a store-cage in a sitting-room for nearly a year—a good record for a soft-bill of any sort.

So that, as on the evidence Prevost's Hummer should be even hardier than the Purple Sunbird, to say nothing of the other, there is nothing to despair about, and when this species is fully understood we can proceed to others with more confidence.

I fed my Sunbirds on diluted condensed milk mixed with crushed biscuit and powdered hard-boiled egg-yolk, but in the light of the subsequent experience of others, I should recommend a mixture of honey, condensed milk, and Mellin's food, to be given in a shallow covered vessel with holes in the cover; and this ought to serve for Humming-birds also. Aphides and spiders should of course be provided wherever possible, though I cannot say that the Zoo

Humming-birds specimens cared much for those given to them—they may have become inveterate syrup-bibbers!

The unidentified Humming-bird imported by Mr. C. Harris in the autumn of 1910, however, was actually reared on honey from the nest, and anyone who reads Gosse's account in the *Birds of Jamaica* of his rather blundering attempt to keep the splendid *Aithurus polytmus* of that island on syrup only will see that that species has a resistant constitution, and would probably do well with better food and more careful treatment. Sunlight, judging from my observations on the Zoo birds, is not indispensable to Hummers, and is even shunned by some when wild, such as the magnificent Crimson Topaz (*Topaza pella*) of Tropical America, which haunts the forest shades, while some species, such as *Selasphorus rufus* in North-west America, and *Eustephanus galeritus* in Tierra del Fuego, range into climates far more cold and bleak than any inhabited by Sunbirds.

To pass to very different groups of birds, in dealing with my especial favourites the Waterfowl, I have also followed as a rule the possibility of avoiding familiar types for export, the chief exception I made being in favour of the Pigmy Goose or Cotton-teal (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) above mentioned; the difficulties in keeping this bird I have dealt with previously (*Avic. Mag.*, VII. 1901, p. 129); I may summarize them here by saying that they consist simply in the fact that the bird is very groggy on its legs and at the same time foolishly eager to climb up wire-netting, so that its enclosure on first capture if small, must be arranged to obviate this. Cotton-teal should always have plenty of water and be kept under netting, unpinioned, as they fly cleverly and perch freely; they are delightfully tame, a rare virtue among the smaller ducks. They feed on the ordinary duck foods.

The same difficulty about land locomotion besets him who would keep the delightful family of Grebes; they are very bad on their legs, especially the larger species, but fortunately do not try to climb. Their plumage very soon loses the water-resisting power if they are kept out of water, so that they must be accustomed to it by degrees. When hardened off, they should be allowed only small landing-places—say about a yard square—at each end of their water-space, or as an island in the middle. The rest of the edges of the

pond should be wired, and if the water can be given a serpentine form, so as to ensure as much swimming exercise as possible, it will be all the better.

I have always fed Grebes on fish, adding insects for Dabchicks, but I have seen the Great Crested Grebe recently kept in the Wader's aviary at the Zoo taking meat on shore, and even robbing the Waders when they took a bit to the water to wash it. As Grebes also take vegetable food, rice and chopped lettuce might well be offered with advantage. An aviary is not a suitable place for them, as they require water-range above everything, and cannot rise on the wing in a small space, so they may as well be clipped or pinioned, except in the case of Dabchicks when on water that is not running and so liable to freeze. Divers and Auks could no doubt be kept in the same way.

Among Waders, I took particular interest in the curious Jaçanas (*Parridæ*), though my fondness for especially beautiful birds led me to specialize in the Pheasant-tailed species (*Hydrophasis chirurgus*), albeit this is the least typical of its family, being more Plover-like than the rest.

These I found lived well on boiled rice mixed with chopped raw fish or hard-boiled egg, but soon became dry and cracked about the hocks if kept long away from a pond, for they did not seem to have the sense to make much use of a mere shallow tray of water. In nature they keep mostly on floating vegetation, swimming occasionally but not often enough to keep their legs wet, so that this peculiarity of the skin puzzles me. It indicates, however, that their legs should be frequently wetted with fresh water in a travelling cage, either by spraying or sluicing, or better by immersing the bottom of the cage in a bath whenever possible. When established they should be kept where they *must* wet their legs to get food, and ought to be taken indoors in winter; I fancy, however, that if the lot I sent to the Zoo for the first time in 1901 had been kept in the excellent little aviary in the Fish House instead of in the Western Aviary, they might have lived longer. Combining the grace of the Crane with the size of a Collared Dove, they are beautiful even in winter plumage, and in the long-tailed summer garb so exquisite that they make the daintiest ducks look coarse in comparison. Their huge long-toed feet do not

look ungraceful as the birds stand on the weeds, or even on the ground: but one point is to be noted about these feet, that the long hind-toe is very weak and easily gets bent forward permanently. While the birds thus affected still walk well, I always turned loose on the Calcutta Museum tank all that went that way, along with other weaklings, some of which did well and stayed even when not clipped. Thus I was able to see them feeding: they ate chiefly water-snails, turning over the leaves to get them, but would take paddy-rice thrown in. Water-snails, by the way, are appreciated by a large variety of water-birds; among my own specimens, I saw them regularly eaten by ducks, both surface-feeders and divers, flamingoes, and coots. They also come in handy for land-birds, and being so easily collected and kept, should not be neglected by aviculturists.

To return to Jaçanas; I found them, though peaceful in confined quarters, rather unsociable on the tank, the large strong hens especially keeping their "worse halves" aloof. In an aviary with other water-birds they should do well, but if no water-plants are in the pool some artificial floating leaves of thin wood should be provided to make them feel more at home, as they are really "lily-trotters," not mud-larks or beach-combers like other waders.

I will add, in conclusion, a few notes on another out-of-the-way wader I was the first to introduce—a Pratincole—though the general management of these does not differ to any important extent from that of small waders generally as laid down by Mr. Barnby Smith in this series, because it just shows how one may pick up a good bird casually. It was when I was on the East African coast twenty years ago, and out with Mr. Macalister of Mombasa, in whose name I presented the bird to the Zoo. He shot and winged it, breaking the fore-arm, and we took it home alive. I cut off the broken part of the wing, placed it in a rough box-cage and fed it on grasshoppers, but it soon left off feeding, so I had to cram it for some days, but ultimately got it on to eating raw meat by itself on board ship, and it reached the Zoo safely to thrive in Quantrill's care. It was the Madagascar Pratincole (*Glareola ocularis*) not previously known from Africa.

I may mention that, opportunities having been lacking, I had never kept anything more difficult than a blackbird before this trip,

but I brought home, in addition to this Pratincole, a Green-necked Touracou (*Gallirex chlorochlamys*), a Fruit-pigeon (*Treron delalandii*), three Black Gallinules (*Limnocorax niger*), a Crow-pheasant (*Centropus superciliosus*), presented by various donors, all new to the Zoo, besides other live-stock, although I was sent to collect earthworms, and of course got them too, both pickled and living.

I feel that this finale, and this article generally, has a rather egotistical vein running through it, but I hope this may be pardoned in consideration of my idea of writing thus, which has been to show that the keeping of out-of-the-way birds chiefly depends on the wish to keep them, and that if one will only give one's mind to it, the pioneer work of aviculture, though difficult, is not absolutely heart-breaking.

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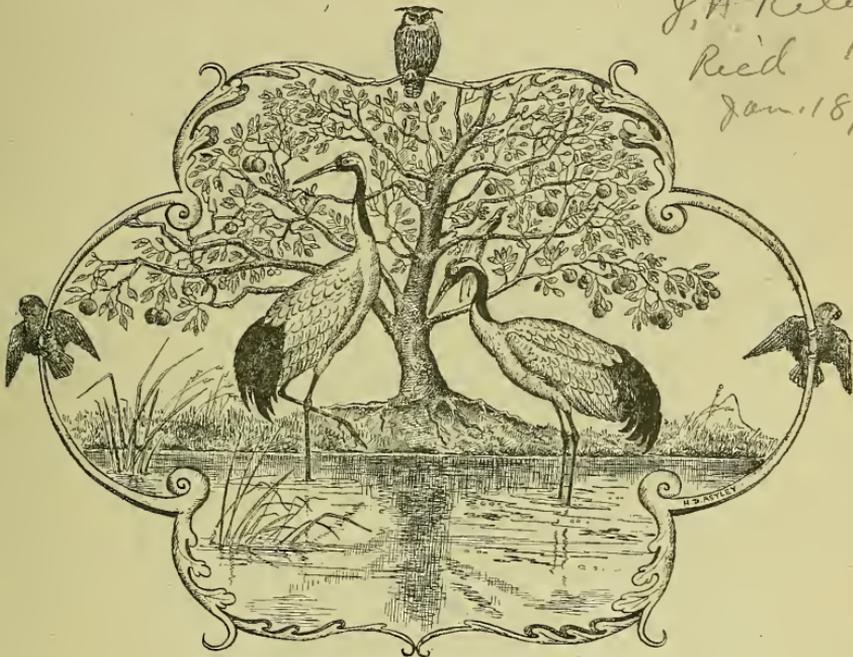
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BREEDING OF THE HOODED  
PARRAKEET.*Psephotus cucullatus.*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., etc.

I think the fact was recorded that last winter my pair of Golden-shouldered Hooded Parrakeets nested twice, in November and December, but although there were young in the eggs, at any rate in the second clutch, they failed to hatch. These happenings took place in a bird-room.

This summer I turned this beautiful pair of what are almost the loveliest of their family into a large outdoor aviary, but true to their wild habits, they refused to nest until October, when in their native country (Northern Australia) their springtime would be flourishing.

On my return from Italy on the 20th of October, where I had been for two months, my bird-keeper told me that he was sure that the female Hooded Parrakeet was sitting in a long log, laid horizontally on some cross-beams under the lean-to roof of the open part of the aviary, about ten feet up. The log in which this interesting event took place is almost six feet long, and hollow from one end to the other, a regular tunnel with a flooring of dry and decayed wood.

After my return home, I began to wonder whether, after all, things had not ended unsatisfactorily, for the female was constantly off the nest, but my hopes revived when she was also often to be seen entering the log from time to time, and better still, to be passing

the night there. Then on another occasion the male also went in, remaining for a few minutes. Nothing could be heard in the way of nestlings being fed, as is the case with many of the parrakeets.

At last I felt I really must remove suspense and look, which I did at the end of October, after I had been home ten days. I mounted a ladder. All was darkness and silence, with a strong odour of mice within. Silhouetted against the light which came through from the far end I could just make out two small round heads moving about. "Mice!" I thought, "how *disgusting!*" But still the old birds continued to go in and out of the log.

On the 15th of November, armed with a portable electric bull's eye lantern, again I mounted the ladder, flashed the light down the tunnel, and there to my huge delight and astonishment, in the very centre of the log were seated four most beautiful young Hooded Parrakeets, almost ready to fly, whilst nearer to me lay the skeleton of a fifth, which must have lived for at any rate a fortnight, for it had feathers on its wings.

To have seen in the same aviary within six months, young "Queen Alexandras" and young Hooded Golden-shoulders was almost more than one's feelings could endure; my bird-keeper and I refrained from sobbing on each other's necks from an overflow of joy, but it required self-control!

I managed to sleep that night, but on the following morning I began to see visions of the nestlings issuing from the log and dashing wildly against the wire-meshing, besides which the weather was—well! what the weather is liable to be in England in the middle of November—and here were birds that ought to have been hatched in the tropics of Australia.

Consequently, on the 16th, I again mounted the ladder, and although it took us a long time, the bird keeper and I managed to urge the young parrakeets, by means of a long cane to leave their dark and happy home. Two flew out and two flopped out, and one immediately dashed hard against the wire, but luckily did not damage itself. The father of the family flew down in a great state of mind, and both parents called loudly. Finally the whole family was put into a small inner aviary, where it is warm, and where risk of injury is almost nil.

The young birds resemble the female, except that the cere and bills are bright orange-yellow, and the young males can evidently be distinguished by a brighter wash of verdigris green on the underparts and perhaps a greyer colour on the forehead. When I handled them, they were all as plump as partridges, and had their crops well filled.

The parents, besides having a daily supply of biscuit sop, and when there was no frost, chickweed and shepherd's purse, have throughout greedily devoured fresh gentles, and to this latter food can probably be attributed this great success. I believe that these rare and most lovely parrakeets have never been bred in England before.

By the 8th of December the young birds could all feed independently.

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## RICE BIRDS.

By KATHARINE CURREY.

Some of the funniest birds I have ever kept were the little Bengalese Rice Birds, black-and-white, and yellow-and-white. I had three pairs in a large cage, living very sociably together, with plenty of moss and earth and grass in their cage, and in the middle a good sized shallow bath. They ate rice, and seed, and dabbled in the wet moss all day long, dragging it into their bath before bathing in the water, and chatting incessantly, only one refrain, exactly like the words "Diddle-diddle-dee!" repeated very fast and loud, and in a high key, while they stood on tiptoe, with their necks stretched out, looking very much astonished. When the sun set they all huddled together in the sheltered end of the cage, mounted on each other, and forming a pyramid. When one of those underneath had had enough of it, he crept out, and down fell the whole erection, amid screaming and chattering. But they soon remade the pyramid, the one who had been underneath now perching on the top—to cool, and the one who had been on the top glad to creep beneath for warmth. As the weather was warm, I supposed it was their way of roosting, and the destruction and rebuilding of the pyramid might have gone on *ad infinitum* had not a wiser bird friend told me the

poor little things wanted a cocoanut-shell to sleep in. As soon as I hung one high up in the cage all six hurried to it and crowded in, chattering, doubtless with joy, but the song never varied. Out and in they popped, standing on the perches and boughs to chatter their "diddle-diddle-dees," till the daylight waned, when they all made for the opening together, pushing and jostling and squeaking. They soon settled to sleep, after a few drowsy "diddle, diddles," ending up with a long drawn-out "dee-e-e."

After a time I tapped softly on the back of the cocoanut to see what would happen. Out popped the little heads, one above the other, to see who was there, looking uncommonly like a crowd of little old gentlemen with night caps on. Then they all withdrew inside again, only an occasional "Peet" revealing the discomfort of one of them, probably trodden on or squeezed by the others.

A pair of St. Helena Waxbills lived in their cage with them for a time and, until the arrival of the cocoanut, were tolerated by the Rice Birds. The Waxbills roosted on a bough like respectable birds and gazed with surprise at the pyramid below them. When the cocoanut appeared on the scene the Waxbills were not allowed to go near it. If one of them ventured to roost on it, or even near it, out would come a Rice Bird, and uttering angry little shrieks, chase it away, and return grumbling to the cocoanut. Two of the Rice Birds laid eggs in the same nesting box, in which they made a tidy little soft nest, but as the whole party sat on them together the eggs did not long remain whole. They then chattered on tip-toe more than ever, one in particular never ceasing the whole day long: indeed he was such a nuisance that I wondered the others put up with his garrulity.

I found a great objection to keeping Rice Birds was the strong and most unpleasant odour about their cage, in spite of its being kept scrupulously clean and the moss perpetually renewed. Their ceaseless repetition too of their one refrain from morning till night was wearisome in the extreme, and I was not sorry when a friend with a collection of little finches took them. Their conceit and self-assertion was most ludicrous, and though they were perfectly tame—I do not suppose it ever would have struck them to be otherwise—I could never have made friends with them.

## NUTHATCHES.

*Citta Cæsia.*

By KATHARINE CURREY.

If a Nuthatch (or pair of them) is kept in confinement it should have a large cage to dart about in, and logs of wood, apple or elder in preference, to hammer its nuts into. In any but a large enclosure it stands the risk of concussion of the brain, when darting and dashing about with the lightning rapidity of its movements. The Nuthatch is extremely intelligent and easily tamed, but it never loses its darting habits. I have often wondered, while watching a Nuthatch hammering at a nut in a hole or cleft, why its long beak never splits, but at the tip the bill curves slightly up—no doubt to protect it.

The protective colouring of the Nuthatch conceals it completely in autumn, as it hangs upon an old lichen-grown apple tree, the grey of the stem, and deep brown of the wet leaves, or inside of the bark where a bit is peeled off, harmonizing exactly with the colours of the little bird. All the Nuthatches I have kept, except one pair, I have let loose in spring after having studied them and their ways. They lived in the orchard (and probably are still there) in company with a pair of Redwings which, after keeping a year, I let loose. The Redwings stayed and nested and sang as we passed beneath the trees where they were. The pair of Nuthatches which formed the exception to those I let fly, I kept in an aviary where there were Doves, and where they had plenty of logs and stems to hammer in. While watching them I used often to think the Doves were worried and angry with the incessant darting about, but I never anticipated the fate that awaited the little Nuthatches. One day both lay dead, stabbed in the back by—*what!* I fear by none other than the fierce beaks of the gentle Doves! I rescued one little Nuthatch once from a cruel fate at a dealers. It had almost dashed itself to death in the tiny prison it was in. However, it revived in a large cage with fresh apple branches and fir logs in it, and plenty of earth and a bath. “Nutty” became very tame and ate out of our hands and soon grew very handsome. In his cage was an old elder stem, with a hole going right through it. This I stood up on end,

and "Nutty" roosted on it, hanging to the bark; then when the nights grew cold he crept inside and roosted there. Suddenly he ceased going into his hole and took to roosting on the top of the log, and nothing would induce him to enter. When I tried to urge him in he would look fixedly at me out of his dark brown eyes as if to answer "How can I? Don't you see I can't go in?" Next morning I took out the elder stem and out popped a mouse! "Nutty" was then let out into a lawn aviary to "rootle" about in every day, and one afternoon a fine hen Nuthatch came and tried to get in. Every day she came during the winter, and after a time he became so restless and looked out for the hen to come that I let him out. She was waiting near on a walnut tree bough, and off they flew together, no doubt to build and nest in the garden.

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## MY BEST BIRD-VIEW LAST YEAR.

By C. BARNBY SMITH.

It has been my good fortune during the past season to see many rare and interesting birds at the Zoo and elsewhere, but there stands out in my memory one sight above all others—a little bird, the most insignificant and the most interesting of all. This bird was a wilful little Phalarope chick.

It came to pass that last June I was able to lift myself out of the ruts of civilization, and, journeying northward, I arrived after some nine days travel at my farthest point, a land of fire and water—a place on the edge of a large lake where many birds abound. A more weird or more picturesque spot in its way it would be difficult to imagine. On the border of the lake, for miles in one direction, extended miniature craters of volcanoes, perfect in form—some of them not more than a few yards in diameter and many of them blackened as though only a few weeks old. Beyond these was a region of grey lava where the surface of the ground was contorted and twisted into fantastic shapes, forming in some places huge tunnels with rounded roofs and in others pillars with intervening cracks of unknown depths.

On the other side the lake were ridges showing yellow and

red in the northern light, and behind these, blue-black mountains streaked with gold in the long gullies and behind the snowy peaks.

The region of grey lava was frequented by Ptarmigan. Only those who have tried to see cock Ptarmigan on grey lava can realise how perfectly their plumage hides them—the white and grey feathers harmonizing completely with the light and shade on the rocks. At intervals between the rocks were patches covered with dwarf scrub frequented by Whimbrel, Golden Plover and Dunlins.

The lake itself and a region about the margin having been declared a protected area the result was that in July there were hundreds of acres of water dotted over with ducks of seemingly endless variety. The repeated cries of the male Long Tails practically drowned all other sounds at times, though occasionally Divers and Wild Geese passing over could be heard. The Arctic Tern moreover were not distinguished for reticence.

Amongst the duck on the lake I was interested to see several broods of Slavonian Grebe—the birds being fairly tame and permitting a good view.

The Great Northern Diver nests freely not far from here and earlier in the season I got over eight fresh eggs and presented them to the Zoo, in the hopes that they would hatch and make a pleasing addition to the Penguin's enclosure, but alas! no good result was obtained in spite of every care. Probably the eggs were too much shaken in transit to England as the journey is necessarily rough and lengthy.

I was told that in a place a very long day's journey distant from the lake and near the edge of the desert (where men seldom go in the spring) Wild Geese had for the past two seasons been found nesting and that an expedition to the spot last spring resulted in bringing back 200 of their eggs—the number being only limited by the carrying capacity of the ponies. It seemed a shame to take all these eggs until one learned they were for necessary human food.

At one end of the lake is an enormous marsh where fire and water seem to meet, that is where the lava is half submerged and there are endless little pools of water (from 10 feet in diameter upwards) surrounded by rushes and rough grass. Here was the

place for Red-necked Phalaropes, and here were the nests and young ones in abundance. The old birds were so plentiful it was difficult to distinguish the different pairs as, although quite tame, they were continuously flying quickly from place to place and getting hopelessly mixed. However, having inspected several nests with eggs I sat down to watch a little brood of four chicks which the old cock bird was looking after amongst the long grass on the edge of a pool. It was a sight I shall not readily forget, to see the care of the old bird for the chicks which were evidently only a few days old. The one precocious chick that so excited my interest *would* insist on sailing out into open water far from land, when the old bird, after calling him with repeated cries without result, swam quickly after him and getting on the outside (farthest from the land) kept pecking him vigorously on the head until he got him to land, and then the old bird stood on the grass (within a few feet of me) and kept spreading his wings and calling loudly for the chick to come to be brooded which, after some demur, it did, and so remained for quite a long time.

This was my best bird-view of the past season. To those who have not seen Phalarope chicks it may seem trivial, but not, I think, to those who have and who, like myself, "take off their shoes."

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## AFRA DOVES.

*Chalcopelia afra.*

By KATHARINE CURREY.

The lovely little Afra Doves are charming pets, but they should live in a flock, not in isolated pairs, for they are very sociable and never seem to wish to fight. A pair I had were restless, as all gregarious birds are when alone, but as soon as I let other Afras into the aviary they settled down, and now generally sit together on one perch, a row of them. Before their present aviary was constructed I had them altogether in a large cage, letting them out into a lawn enclosure to fly about during the day. They knew very soon what they had to do at sunset, and one by one came down from the branches and hopped into the cage to be taken in, out of the way of

nocturnal enemies. Occasionally one got out, and after a flight round the garden, came to be let in again.

Their note is strangely mournful, a sort of reproachful moan, ending in three little notes like a toy trumpet: "Too-tu-too! Too-tu-too! Too-tu-too!"

I have never seen my *Afras* bathe, and they drink very seldom. They love basking in the sun, but will stand almost any weather provided they have a shelter to retire to, out of any draught or cold wind. I find it difficult to identify a pair, as the sexes are alike, and they are too sociable for 'aloofness.' Their beauty tempted me to buy the first pair I had, for they are some of the loveliest of the doves, with their soft mouse-grey backs and wings, the latter having metallic spots on the top, and a rich chestnut brown underneath, visible when in flight. Their heads are ashen blue, the eyes large and dark brown, and the white breast has a faint rose blush on it.

Last summer I received a pair of little Ruddy Turtles, also beautiful birds; the cock rose-red, with a light blue head and black ring round the neck; the hen a soft grey-brown, with a black neck-ring also. They and the *Afras* live most harmoniously together in a new rustic aviary I have just had constructed, and which I find quite satisfactory. It is made in two pieces, each half easily carried by a man and a boy, and fastened together, so as to defy rats, at the top of the gable, which is 6ft. 6in. high. The aviary is made of larch poles with the bark left on, and half-inch wire-netting, the latter carried on to form a rat-proof floor, sunk six inches into the ground and filled in with earth and gravel and turf. The aviary is 6ft. 6in. wide (facing the gable) and 5ft. 4in. deep. The roof on the north side is partially covered by boarding over the wire, and a moveable shelf runs along the whole width, with nesting baskets. They could also nest in a fir-tree in the cage, or among the branches which form their perches. The cage faces South. Sheets of zinc laid on half way along the wire roof protect from bad weather. The earth must be raked over every other day and the perches cleaned, a very simple matter.

I am curious to learn how long the little party will be able to stay out of doors; they have weathered nine degrees of frost and were none the worse for it, but as I write we are not yet quite in winter.

## SOME SPONTANEOUS VARIATIONS IN MALLARD & MUSCOVY DUCKS.

*Anas boscas and Cairina moschata.*

By FRANK FINN, B.A., F.Z.S.

Although both of them are ancestors of mere poultry-birds, the Mallard of our common domestic ducks, and the Muscovy of those kept over a large part of the Tropics, especially in Tropical Africa and America, they may perhaps be allowed to form the subject of the present article, inasmuch as the Mallards dealt with are those kept as more or less ornamental birds, and the Muscovy is in Europe and India, and probably elsewhere, chiefly kept as a curiosity, and not for poultry purposes as in many hot countries.

In looking over the mallards kept in our London parks, it will be noticed that many of the drakes vary from the typical form with white collar, chocolate breast, and grey flanks, in two directions—in one case the white collar remains, but the reddish-brown of the breast is continued along the flanks and sometimes on to the shoulders, while the upper parts are of a paler grey, often nearly white; in the other the white collar disappears, and the pencilled-grey of the flanks invades the breast, to the complete exclusion of the chocolate tint, reaching up to the green of the neck.

Both varietal forms are usually definite, but there is a little inter-gradation with the type; the chocolate may extend only a little beyond the breast, or conversely may appear at the base of the neck in an otherwise grey-breasted bird.

M. G. Rogeron, in his most excellent work "Les Canards," p. 140, has cited a case which shows that there is a definite form of female correlated with the grey-breasted drake; he having hatched, from mallard ducks of a wild origin, some black ducklings—regular little niggers "vrais petits négrellons," he calls them—he expected to rear from them a black variety, but found that when they came into full feather, the drakes were of the grey-breasted form above noted, while the ducks differed from the normal mottled-brown type in having the head uniformly speckled, without the light eyebrows and cheek-stripes to be seen in the normal mallard female. The speculum or wing-bar in both sexes of this variety was

dull black instead of blue as in the type. Such ducks may be often observed, but until M. Rogeron's observations were made there was nothing to connect this slight variation with the markedly distinct drakes and ducklings. He mentions, by the way, that the ducks of this strain, whether normal or of the variety above described, have always continued, though mated to unrelated drakes, to produce both types (about equally divided in number) in their broods, except in the case of one which, mated to a Pintail (*Dafila acuta*) drake, produced no black young, though her previous broods had always shown some.

This set me wondering as to what may be the female correlated with the drake showing an excess of red-brown, extending on to the flanks, and this I have not yet found out. But I have this year carefully watched some red-sided drakes in Regent's Park on their assumption of undress, and have found that when in this stage they are lighter in tint than normal drakes in undress, redder on the breast, and whiter on the throat and sides, with the dark markings more in the form of simple spots than of pencilling; in other words, they correspond rather closely to the abnormally light females one often sees in park and farmyard ducks.

Moreover, this year, six ducklings were hatched in the London Zoo from eggs laid by the female of a pair of mallard-coloured park ducks which visited and nested in the Gardens. Three of these were of the usual mallard colour in the down—black above and yellow below and on the cheeks—the other three were yellow with a dash of black on crown and back. Of course I expected these last to fledge off white, or at least heavily pied, in the style of the Indian Runner, whose markings also occur as a spontaneous variation. But to my astonishment they grew up simply pale-brown ducks with dark markings and whitish throats—the light form above alluded to, in fact. It was also noticeable by the way, that they grew and fledged much quicker than the normal ducklings, which developed the usual mallard plumage as one would expect.

Is it possible, then, that the red-flanked, pale-backed drake is the correlative of the ochreous, white-throated duck, and that both are yellow when young? If so, we have two variations constantly cropping up in the mallard under our protection. one tending towards

melanism, the other towards albinism, yet never actually getting a white or black plumage, and looking much like true species. Probably under human selection they would breed true, but the females seem to exercise no choice, the red-flanked or grey-breasted drakes finding favour equally with the typical form of the species.

The type form of the Muscovy duck is not so well known as that of the Mallard, the species being a bird of the warm parts of America, so I may here mention that the true colour is black richly glossed with green or purple according to the part of the plumage, with the wing-coverts, upper and under, pure white. The drake has the naked skin of the face black (except along the eyebrows, where it is red) and smooth, not carunculated, and the caruncle above the base of the bill very small; the duck has no bare skin about the face and no caruncle at all, but entirely resembles the drake in plumage.

The immature birds have the forehead, cheeks, and underparts frosted with white edgings to the feathers, and this is lost by a moult, and the facial bare patch gained, before the white wing-patch is developed, *i.e.* by the end of the first year, judging from the development of wild-coloured domestic specimens. In such, the denudation of the skin round the eye is preceded by a growth of white feathers in that part, seeming to show that having white feathers on a part is next to having none at all there—a fact which may have wide significance. In the domestic female the face is usually bare as in the male, but always red, whereas in the male it is sometimes nearly all black as in the wild form.

The ducklings of typically-coloured tame Muscovys are like young mallard, *i.e.* black above and yellow on the cheeks and below, and in fact, only differ from them noticeably in having the “nail” at the end of the beak red and the tail longer.

I will now detail the results of crossing a wild male Muscovy, received at the Zoo in 1908, and still living, with tame females. His first mate was of a variety common in the domestic race—which generally, by the way, shows more white than the wild type—she had a white head, red eye-patch, dark eyes, and dull yellow feet, the rest of the colouring being normal. Her ducklings all showed some white speckling on the head, and were very free flyers and perched readily in trees, that being the habit of the wild race—

the tame bird's ambitions do not usually go beyond sitting on the fence. This led to the loss of some of them; some were sold with their mother, and one, which showed the least white on the head, was mated with her father, the wild drake. She had grown up to be very like her father, being slighter in body than the tame race, but as she became adult she developed some bare red skin at the base of the bill and just round the eye, but not a full bare face; moreover she got some white speckling on the head (white on the head does not develop, so far as I have seen, in the first plumage, even in fully white-headed Muscovys) and had olive-yellow feet.

Her offspring were normal in the down, but most were sold early, and the one female retained for breeding resembled her so closely, still showing a little white speckling and red skin on the head, and pale feet, that she might have been her sister instead of her daughter. Probably in consequence of being so closely inbred, her daughter never laid, pined away, and is now dead. Meanwhile the Society had acquired another pair of Muscovy ducks, also from South America, but this time obviously, from their heavy forms, of domestic origin; their colour was peculiar, a shaded brown, much like a "poker-work" scorched picture; the drake, whose eye-patch was black with red eyebrows, had not fully developed the white wing-patch, but the female had, and was fully adult. She had a red eye-patch and dark eyes, while the half-wild female and her three-quarter-wild offspring had light hazel eyes like the wild drake. These birds soon moulted into the dark green-black plumage of the wild bird, and the drake acquired the full white wing patch like his mate; she also had from the first a white patch on the front of the neck. The brown colour must have been due to fading under a hot sun; they never assumed it again here. When the three-quarter-bred wild female was mated to her grandfather, the half-bred wild bird was paired with the above tame drake as well as his own original companion. Both became mothers of ducklings, those of the half-wild bird being normally black and yellow, assuming the white-edged under-plumage when feathering, and judging from the one drake kept till adult age, following the normal course of developments the nasal caruncle was still smaller than in the wild bird.

The ducklings of the tame duck were, however, very peculiar—all sooty black except for a yellow patch on the fore-neck ; in some this yellow was succeeded by some white feathers, but in all, the portions of the immature plumage—cheeks, forehead, and underparts—which are white-edged in the type, were edged with brown, which resulted in the young birds looking at a little distance completely black all over. The two which were kept to adult age, however—a drake and a duck—assumed the white wing-patch as usual, and no one would have known they had been melanistic in the downy stage. The drake also, as in the normal-coloured form, developed white feathers round the eyes before becoming bare there ; the duck, curiously enough, has developed these feathers but as yet has not become bare there.

She was mated to the wild drake—as her mother should have been in my opinion—this year, and laid when much less than a year old, and before her white wing patch was developed. Only one duckling, a normal one, was hatched from her first clutch, and this soon died ; from her second six were hatched, two of the normal yellow-bellied and faced form, and four all sooty-black, without any yellow on the neck ; the mother, by the way, was one of those which had no white feathers on the neck.

These ducklings are now fledged ; the two normal-coloured ones have the normal white-edged immature plumage, the others have the forehead, cheeks, and underparts edged with brown instead of white, and look all black a little way off. None have their grandmother's white neck-patch. Meanwhile the said grandmother has had another brood by the same tame drake, just like the first, all black with yellow neck-patches.

Unfortunately there is no means of knowing what this tame drake was like as a duckling, but as the half-wild duck when mated to him still bred normal-coloured young, and as his daughter by his tame mate still breeds some dark young (even darker than her mother's, being without yellow neck-patch) even when mated to the wild drake, it seems that for this new dark variety of the duckling she alone is responsible ; she is, in fact, a highly dominant bird in this respect.

It is curious, however, that while even the three-quarter-bred

wild bird descended from the other (white-headed) tame duck showed red round the eye, this has not yet appeared in the purely tame daughter of the black tame bird, which daughter yet has obviously the clumsy tame shape. Probably her premature breeding has arrested development.

I may here mention another curious instance of variation in Muscovy ducks which occurred at the London Zoo several years ago. In this case, a tame drake, normal except for a few white feathers and a general deficiency of green sheen, accompanied by a slaty tinge, was mated to two tame ducks of the white-headed variety. The offspring were about half normal in the down, the other half being pale drab or lavender-grey above instead of black. The normal birds grew up normal, but got white heads later, as far as I saw in those which were kept; of the grey-backed six were kept (the others being sold in the down), and these all grew up pale grey like Andalusian fowls; two had the erectile crown-feathers white. Both these were drakes; in fact only one of the six was a duck.

I have seen this grey variety elsewhere, but it is rare; but of the few I have thus seen three were females, though those were not all grey, but about half white. It evidently occurs sporadically, and may not be sex-limited to any great extent.

Some interesting conclusions may be drawn from the study of these familiar ducks for they throw light on several colour problems. We see that a new variation in down-colour (black) may arise suddenly, and be correlated with an adult plumage differing little (in the Mallard) or not at all (in the Muscovy) from the normal type. Furthermore, in the Muscovy case the black type of young seem to have decidedly dominant tendencies.

This may help to explain the curious fact that of our two most familiar British diving-ducks, the Pochard (*Nyroca ferina*) and the Tufted Duck (*Fuligula fuligula*), the former has pied young much like the young of the Mallard, and the latter has ducklings all black except for the yellowish abdomen. Those theorists who would maintain that all differences of colour have a close relation to the environment would be puzzled to say why the young of these birds, breeding on the same fresh waters and remarkably equal in diving power, should be so different in colour; one type must in-

evitably be out of harmony with its environment, if the other is protective. But if the black young of the Tufted Duck are simply the result of a dominant variation in the direction of blackness, there is no need to drag in the environment at all.

And if the environment does not matter, we can understand why the Mallard, essentially a temperate-zone breeder, should have young so like the Muscovy, which breeds in tropical swamps, where the environment is not quite the same. Both of these are surface-feeders, and it evidently does not matter how the young are coloured.

*(To be continued).*

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## BIRD NOTES FROM THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

At this time of the year, as a rule, very few birds of any importance arrive at the Gardens, which is just as well considering the uncertainty of the weather conditions; and there is not much to record, the past two months having been no exception to the general rule.

In November, three examples of the Indian Pond Heron (*Ardeola grayi*) and a Koël (*Eudynamis honorata*) were purchased, neither having been exhibited for some years. Only once previously, in fact, has the Pond Heron been represented in the collection, namely in 1901, when Mr. E. W. Harper presented a pair. It is quite a small heron, only some 18 inches in total length, and the male is a beautiful bird when in breeding plumage, its head pale yellowish brown, carrying a crest of long white feathers, the wings and tail white, and the back feathers long and of a rich maroon colour. One of the birds at the Gardens is in this summer plumage, the other two in the brown plumage of the non-breeding season.

Mr. Finn tells us that the arrangement of colours of this heron renders it very inconspicuous when on the ground, but most conspicuous when the bird gets up, as it appears then to be almost a white bird. Its food consists of frogs, crabs and small fish and insects, and it frequents even the smallest ponds, and is common in nearly all parts of India.





Photo by D. Seth-Smith.

NEPALESE EAGLE-OWL  
(*Huhua nipalensis*).

West, Newman proc.

The Koël is a purely fruit-eating cuckoo, the male of a glossy greenish-black colour, and the female a brown bird, which lays its eggs in the nests of the Indian Crow. Its call-note resembling the syllables "Ku-il," is repeated time after time, ascending and descending in the scale, and is one of the most familiar sounds in India in the Spring.

The Society is indebted to Mr. W. Cross, of Liverpool, for the valuable donation of a Southern Fruit Pigeon (*Crocopus chlorogaster*), another Indian species, which is by no means common in living collections, although common enough in its own land. The prevailing colour is olive green, the breast being greenish yellow and the top of the head and cheeks grey.

There are now eight species, belonging to five genera of fruit-pigeons in the Gardens, and it is much to be hoped that we may be successful in inducing some, of which we have pairs, to breed next summer.

The collection has been enriched by the purchase of four more specimens of the blue variety of the Budgerigar, all of which are young birds, not nearly so bright in colour as they will be when adult. We have one adult specimen, a male, which is mated to a green hen, so the pair should produce some interesting young birds next season. The blue colouring is very intense, and well set off by the pure white of the forehead. We know that the yellow variety of this little parrot occasionally occurs in the wild state (a case is recorded in the October number of the *Emu*), and it is hoped that ornithologists in Australia will keep an eye open for wild specimens of the blue phase which has so far only turned up in captivity. We hope soon to be able to exhibit side by side the three phases of this interesting little parrot.

A bird of very great interest is an example of the rare Nepalese Eagle-Owl (*Huhua nipalensis*) from Eastern Nepal, recently purchased from a gentleman who had taken it from the nest last April and reared it by hand. It is a very handsome owl, very light in colour with large black eyes and long ear-tufts. Only once before has the species been represented in the collection, and that nearly forty years ago.

D. S.-S.

## THE BIRD SHOW AT THE HORTICULTURAL HALL.

By HERBERT GOODCHILD, M.B.O.U.

In the last week-end of Nov., 1912, the twenty-fourth annual exhibition of the London Cage Bird Association was held. From the point of view of the number of entries (some 2,200) the event was a great success, and also from the point of view of species to be seen, there being some six species of birds that the present writer had never seen alive before. The judging of the Foreign Bird Section was in the hands of Mr. D. Seth-Smith, and this had an advantage over the previous arrangement of Mr. Astley judging, as with Mr. D. Seth-Smith as judge, we had the pleasure of seeing some of Mr. Astley's rarities, one especially, the Blue Niltava, (*Xanthopygia cyanomelæna*) securing the coveted prize for the choicest foreign bird in the Show, and being greatly admired for its beauty of plumage and condition.

The foreign birds were arranged in seventeen classes, of which two were for members of the L.C.B.A. only, and one was an "open selling class."

This brief review is not written in any sense to either criticise or commend the judging, but to give those of our readers who were not fortunate enough to be present an idea of the number, variety, and rarity of the birds exhibited.

The total number of entries in the Foreign Section was 167, this excluding Siberian Goldfinches or Bullfinches or the very interesting "Continental" class, which will be dealt with later.

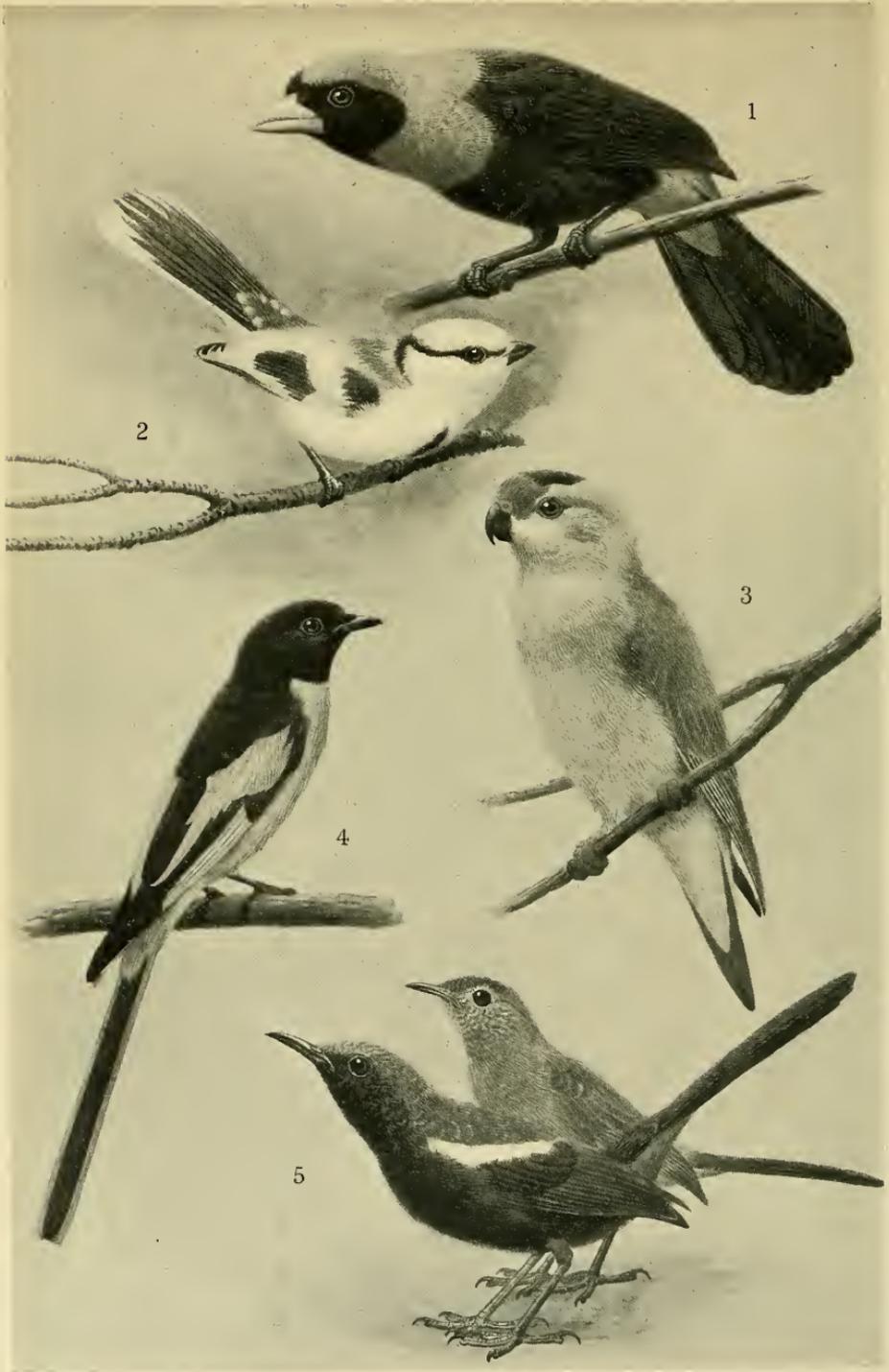
In the first class, for Budgerigars, Love Birds and Hanging Parrots, the only rarity was Mr. A. Ezra's Abyssinian Love-bird (*Agapornis taranta*), this being the first time I had ever seen one alive.\* It is a very plain little bird, and this specimen was in splendid condition and was awarded first prize.

The next class, for Parrakeets in general, contained the rare Purple-crowned Lorikeet (Mr. C. T. Maxwell) a species only recently imported. It is a native of South Australia and got first prize. A very good male Queen Alexandra Parrakeet of Miss Lydia

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[\* There has been a specimen at the Zoological Gardens for some time.—ED.]





H. Goodchild del.

West, Newman proc.

RARE FOREIGN BIRDS AT THE L.C.B.A. SHOW.

1. RED AND BLACK TANAGEE (*Phlogothraupis sanguinolenta*). 2. AZURE TIT (*Parus cyaneus*). 3. PURPLE-CROWNED LORIKEET (*Glossopsittacus porphyrocephalus*). 4. SHORT-BILLED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus brevirostris*). 5. BROWN-BACKED ROBINS (*Thamnobia cambaiensis*).

Clare's had second prize, while her Turquoise Parrakeet (*Neophema pulchella*), the first I ever saw living, was fourth; third prize went to a Barraband's Parrakeet. Mr. Astley showed a pair of Queen Alexandra's Parrakeets—I was told the pair that had bred in his aviaries. These particular birds looked ill at ease. An interesting bird in this class, described as a "rare Rosella," but which Mr. Finn and I both believe to have been a Tasmanian Parrakeet (*Platycercus flaviventris*) was shown by Mr. T. J. Dawson. Other fine birds were a good cock Many-Colour (*Psephotus multicolor*) and the Masked Parrakeet from Fiji, shown by Mr. C. T. Maxwell. The class also included Bauer's, Barrabands, Crimson-winged, Yellow-rumped, Red-rumped, Barnard's, Blossom-headed, Red-headed Conure and Rosella Parrakeets.

The class for short-tailed Parrots included a true pair of Blue-rumped Parrots,—the same pair I believe that Mr. L. W. Hawkins showed at the Crystal Palace in Feb. 1912, and of which a black-and-white plate appeared in our Magazine. They were then in immature plumage, but have now got into adult dress. These got first prize; second prize went to Mr. Maxwell's Black Cockatoo; third to the Rev. G. H. Raynor's charming Meyer's Parrot; fourth to his rare Everett's; v.h.c. to his Aubrey's, and h.c. to our member Mr. Sydney Williams for his Ducorps Cockatoo, which he tells me may not only be trusted out of its cage, but which will go out with him seated on his shoulder. Mr. Williams also "swept the decks" in the class for Weavers, taking first with a Crimson, second with a Red-headed, third with a Black-headed, and fourth with a Kaffir—a fine team.

In the class for Waxbills in general, Mr. R. J. Watts got first with his charming little Green Avadavats; third with Indian Silverbills; v.h.c. with his Cordon Bleus and h.c. with Golden-breasted Waxbills, while second went to Mr. F. Howe for Golden-breasted Waxbills, and fourth to Dr. G. B. Thwaites for his pair of Cordon Bleus. All the birds in this class were of well-known species. Class 182 for the rarer Waxbills, Fire Finches, etc. had nine entries. Miss Lydia Clare's Violet-eared Waxbill being first; Mr. Maxwell's ditto second; Mr. S. Beaty's rare Black-faced Waxbill third; Mr. C. T. Maxwell's uncommon Blue-breasted Waxbills fourth; his Melba Finch v.h.c., while a pair of Black-cheeked Waxbills of Mr.

Watts got h.c. Mr. A. Ezra exhibited a charming pair of Vinaceous Fire-Finches.

Grassfinches, Whydahs, etc. numbered fourteen. First prize going to Mr. S. Beaty's Golden-backed Whydah; second to Mr. C. H. Row's Fire-tailed Finches (pair); third to Mr. C. T. Maxwell's Tri-colour Parrot Finch; fourth to his Peal's Parrot Finch, while several well-known species also figured in the series.

The true Finches, Buntings, etc. also numbered fourteen, and first prize went to Mr. A. Ezra's rare and sleek Chilian Siskin, the first I ever saw alive; second to Mr. Hawkins's Rainbow Bunting; third to Mr. Ezra's Sepoy Finch (which had, as usual, turned bright yellow in captivity); fourth to Mr. Maxwell's Rainbow Bunting, and v.h.c. to Mrs. Ethel Greene's South (?) "African" Siskins. The class also included Quail, Cuba and Green Singing Finches and a pair of Japanese Hawfinches.

The class for named Tanagers only numbered six, four of them being *Calliste tricolor*: the other two *fastuosa*. First prize, *as usual*, going to our redoubtable friend, Mr. S. M. Townsend, with his only exhibit in this class, a Tricolor.

The class for the rare Tanagers numbered eleven. First prize going to Mr. Maxwell's unique Red and Black Tanager, which is not yet in show condition; this was the first living one I had seen. Fourth to his Necklace Tanagers. Lady Kathleen Pilkington showed four birds, the now well-known Blue and Black Tanager—the only living one I ever saw,—a Black-backed, Festive and Pectoral. Mr. A. Ezra showed a pair of the rare Black-backed Tanagers (*Calliste melanonota*), Miss Bousfield a White-capped Tanager and Mr. Townsend a charming specimen of the uncommon Yellow Tanager.

The Sugar Birds, Sun Birds, etc., as usual had the most interesting and beautiful birds in the show. Foremost of all was the Amethyst-rumped Sun Bird (*Cinnyris zeylonica*) of Mr. Ezra's, a bird that, as a living gem, might grace the palace of an Emperor. Mr. Maxwell's pair of Purple Sugar-birds came next; third to Mr. S. M. Townsend's Black-legged Blue Sugar-bird,—a rare thing in collections of skins and the only one I ever saw alive—in perfect condition; fourth prize went to the Hon. Mrs. Bourke's Purple Sugar-bird. Mr. Maxwell showed a Banana Quit (*Certhiola luteola* I

believe), and an Amethyst-rumped Sun-bird, while Mr. Hawkins showed a Purple Sun-bird (*C. asiatica*) and a Black-headed Sugar Bird.

The class for the Shamahs, Bulbuls, etc., had nine entries, the only uncommon birds being a Red-eared Bulbul and a Dyal or "Magpie Robin."

The "odds and ends" class contained three specimens of the rare Loo Choo Robin (*Erithacus komadori*) a species that is only represented in the National Collection by two or three skins, in second rate condition, of birds that have been in captivity, but Lady Kathleen Pilkington, the Hon. Mrs. Bourke and Mr. A. Ezra, all showed birds the British Museum would be only too glad to possess. In this class the gem of the show, for rarity, if not for beauty, was the Blue Niltava (*Xanthopyga cyanomelæna*) of Mr. Astley's, a bird found from China to Borneo wherein the sexes differ vastly, the male being black, deep blue and white, and the female brown and sandy. Everybody admired this exhibit, which was charmingly tame, but which was not easily seen in its deep box cage. Mr. Astley also showed Indian Brown-backed Robins (not Wrens, as listed) while the Hon. Mrs. Bourke also showed a Ruby-throated Warbler and a Minivet (*Perecrocotus brevirostris*), the first Minivet of any species that I ever saw alive. Unfortunately, the red colour, which should be vermilion, had turned pale in captivity. Mr. Ezra showed a Japanese Redbreast (*Erithacus akahige*). Mr. Maxwell a "Coppersmith" Barbet, a common bird in Calcutta, but a rare one in London, and Mr. J. Frostick, an Indian Hunting Cissa, which, like the Minivet, had lost its bright colour by moulting in captivity.

Class 190, "Pairs for Foreign Hybrid Breeding" contained: first, pair of Fire-tailed Finches (C. H. Row); second, Sydney and Violet-eared Waxbills (C. T. Maxwell); third, Russian Goldfinch and Rose Finch (*Carpodacus*), and (C. T. Maxwell) Tricolour and Pretre's Tanagers.

The remaining classes for foreign birds (selling and members' classes) contained a Yellow-rumped Finch—first shown by Mr. Seth-Smith at the Crystal Palace,—American Nonpareil, Paradise Whydah (Mrs. Thynne's), Silver Tanager, Mr. J. Dewhurst's African Coleys and Mr. W. A. Shepherd's three exhibits of Mynahs, of species I have not determined.

The British birds, all told, numbered about 340 entries, but the great majority were the common seed-eating species—Goldfinches, Bullfinches, Linnets, etc. However, there were five or six Hawfinches, several Snow and Cirl Buntings, an Ortolan, and others.

Another class contained a Nuthatch, several Bearded Reedlings, and a Marsh Tit. Amongst the Larks were two Shorelarks, a Woodlark, a Meadow and a Tree Pipit. Another class had a Ring Ouzel and a Great Grey Shrike, the latter was very much at home; and a Waxwing, no uncommon bird at a Cage Bird Show. Another class contained five Nightingales and seven Blackcaps. The Jays, etc. contained a Jay, a Magpie, and two Choughs, one of which, by its size and colour might have been of the Himalayan race. Wag-tails numbered two Greys and three Yellows.

The mixed class for insectivorous birds included five or six Dartford Warblers, a Whitethroat, a Treecreeper, a Wheatear, a Wood Wren and a Black Redstart. The next class for hen birds had two more Dartford Warblers, a Goldcrest and some Bearded Reedlings. Those who like abnormal birds would admire the white "Blackbird" and the lutino Yellow Bunting that were in a class for "rare-feathered birds."

Mr. Shepherd exhibited a Kestrel Falcon, the only bird of prey in the Show, unless one includes the Shrike.

The "Continental" birds included the lovely Azure Tit of Mr. Maxwell's, his Red-breasted Flycatcher and Mr. Ezra's European Bee-Eater.

Altogether the Show was one the L.C.B.A. might well be proud of, and the visitors thankful for.

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## THE MEMBERS' DINNER.

Provided a sufficient number of members express a wish to be present, the proposed dinner will be held on Friday, Feb. 7th, 1913, at the Café Royal, Regent Street, at 7 p.m. The price of the dinner, excluding wines, will be 6/-. Morning dress.

Since rooms at the Café Royal are in great request during the winter months, it is necessary to give the proprietors as long a notice

as possible. Members are, therefore, requested to inform the Hon. Business Secretary before Jan. 10th, if they wish to attend.

R. I. POCKOCK, *Hon. Business Sec.,  
Zoological Society, Regent's Park.*

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## RETIREMENT OF MR. BONHOTE

FROM THE EDITORSHIP AND TREASURERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY.

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Members of the Avicultural Society will share the regret of the Council at the retirement of Mr. J. L. Bonhote from the double post of Editor and Treasurer, which he has held since August 1910. For several years before that date Mr. Bonhote acted as Treasurer; and when Mr. Finn, owing to pressure of other work, was compelled to give up the editorship, Mr. Bonhote kindly consented to fill his place, and, with the sanction and approval of the Council, to retain the duties of Treasurer as well. Mr. Bonhote's tenure of these conjoint offices has been followed by marked improvement, both in the financial affairs of the Society and in the quality of the Magazine; and the Council wishes to take the opportunity of expressing their great indebtedness to him for giving so much of his time, energy and knowledge, without remuneration, to the work the conduct of the Magazine demands, and of wishing him every success in his new duties, the undertaking of which has compelled his reluctant retirement from the active and prominent part he has hitherto taken in the affairs of the Avicultural Society. They hope, nevertheless, that he will still be able to help the Society by contributing articles from time to time to its journal.

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## MR. BONHOTE'S SUCCESSOR.

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During the past four months Mr. Bonhote has found it impossible to give the necessary attention to producing the Magazine, and, since last October, the duties of Editor have been carried out by Mr. D. Seth-Smith, to whom the sincere thanks of the Society are due for undertaking the work for which his official post in the Zoological Society leaves him but little spare time. The Executive

Committee, however, has great satisfaction in announcing that Mr. H. D. Astley has most kindly volunteered his services as Editor in succession to Mr. Bonhote. Mr. Astley's wide experience in aviculture and competence as an ornithologist are so well known that the Committee feels assured that members of the Society will share their confidence that the editing of the Magazine could not possibly be entrusted to better hands.

Mr. D. Seth-Smith has kindly consented to produce the February number of the Magazine; but articles and notes for the March and subsequent numbers should be sent to Mr. H. D. Astley, whose address, until further notice, will be:—

BENHAM-VALENCE,  
SPEEN,  
NEWBURY.

Since the work of our Editor is often rendered arduous by the necessity of applying to Members for articles and notes and by having to fill up vacant spaces in the Magazine from his own pen, the Council venture to hope that Members will make every effort to lighten Mr. Astley's labours in these respects by the unsolicited contribution of 'copy.'

R. I. POCKOCK,  
*Hon. Business Secretary.*

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## REVIEWS.

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### FOR LOVE OF BEASTS.

A PAMPHLET PUBLISHED BY THE ANIMAL FRIENDS' SOCIETY.\*

This is one of the usual brochures directed partly against what is called "sport" and partly against the study of animal life in captivity. As usual it assumes that the sensations and mental equipment of the lower animals are as highly developed as in man, whereas every student of Nature knows that they are nothing of the kind.

Personally I consider sport, in so far as it consists of the hunting and shooting down of semi-domesticated animals, a selfish

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\* For Love of Beasts, by JOHN GALSWORTHY. Reprinted from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, price Twopence.

if healthful pastime; but I should not pretend to question the right of those who think differently to indulge in it, because (after all is said) we have the highest authority for claiming that man's welfare is of more importance than that of a beast. I do not excuse pigeon-shooting from traps: if a man desires to show his skill, shooting at glass balls thrown in the air would answer the purpose equally well.

A bird in a cage does not spend its existence in vain regrets over its lost liberty: in all probability its mind is a complete blank as regards the past. It lives in the present and is content so long as it is kindly treated and has plenty of food suited to its needs.

If the well-meaning persons who write pamphlets of this character would confine themselves to condemnation of those practices which all aviculturists condemn, such as the barbaric adornments worn by thoughtless women and involving the death of thousands of innocent and beautiful creatures, or the wholesale slaughter of useful birds by ignorant persons, they would be doing good work. As it is they are hindering the advancement of science.

A. G. B.

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THE SCOTTISH NATURALIST. Nos. 10 & 11.

In these numbers Mr. A. Landsborough Thomson continues his Report upon the Aberdeen University Bird-migration inquiry, Mr. Robert Somerville publishes a short article on the occurrence of the little Owl in Fife, Mr. Percy H. Grimshaw gives a useful account of the food of the Common Pheasant. Among the short notes William Evans records the breeding of the Tree-Sparrow in Midlothian and the appearance of Sabine's Gull in the Firth of Forth, D. Mackenzie records the shooting of a Black-tailed Godwit in the Outer Hebrides and A. D. Carmichael the breeding of Fulmars at Reawick, Shetland; Hugh Mackay notes the occurrence of the Green Sandpiper at Skinburness where it was secured on August 30th, and G. D. Ferguson publishes Notes on the Fulmar Petrel as observed by him in Orkney and Shetland in July, August and September.

A. G. B.

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*THE EMU.*

The October number of this journal is well up to its usual standard of excellence, its chief feature being an admirable paper by Mr. Sidney W. Jackson, entitled *Haunts of the Spotted Bower Bird*. In it the author describes a trip to a station on the west bank of the Moonie River in New South Wales, about 500 miles north-west of Sydney, where he camped for about five months, during which he gained a better acquaintance with the Spotted Bower Bird than probably any person has previously possessed. His diary of field observations, which was kept daily, is of very great interest, throwing considerable light on the habits not only of the Bower-birds, which were his daily companions, but upon a large number of other birds which frequented the district, which appears to have been a regular ornithologists' paradise, notwithstanding the fact that the season was excessively dry and hot—100° during the night of December 25th.

Mr. Jackson succeeded in taking a number of photographs of the nests and eggs and young of the Spotted Bower-bird and several other species, and some of these have been admirably reproduced to accompany the paper.

Other subjects dealt with include "Internal Parasites recorded from Australian Birds," by Dr. Harvey Johnston. "Field Ornithology in South Australia," by Captain White, and "Notes on the Mistletoe Bird" by Mr. L. G. Chandler. D. S.-S.

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REPORT ON THE IMMIGRATION OF SUMMER  
RESIDENTS IN THE SPRING OF 1911.

The Committee appointed by the British Ornithologist Club to carry out observations on the migration of British birds have had no light task to perform, and the present exhaustive report, like those previously issued, is an imposing volume containing an immense amount of useful information on a subject which, until it was taken up by this Committee, was very little known.

As in previous Reports, the various species are taken separately and the dates of their first arrival and subsequent movements over our islands, as observed by the large band of ornithologists and other

observers who are working in touch with the Committee, are recorded. Thus we read that the Turtle Dove appears to have entered the country mainly on the south-east between Suffolk and Hampshire, the first arrival being recorded on April 13th. By the first of May one of these first arrivals had already laid in Essex. The main body of these doves arrived between May 4th and 15th, and slowly extended north and west, immigration being continued on the east coast right up to the end of May.

All of the spring and autumn migrants are dealt with in the same way, and weather conditions for the period covered are published.

Although efforts have been made to condense some of the matter in this Report, it considerably exceeds in size those previously issued, running to no less than 332 pages. D. S.-S.

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#### BRITISH BIRDS.\*

The September to November numbers of this charmingly illustrated and interesting Magazine fully keep up the standard of excellence to which we confidently look forward as each number appears. We cannot spare the space to give details of all matters of interest recorded in these parts of the volume, but would call special attention to Mr. Abel Chapman's article, illustrated admirably by his own pencil and entitled *Spring-notes on the Borders*, in the September number; Miss E. L. Turner's instructive paper "*Notes on the Bearded Tits*," with photographs by the authoress, in the October number, and Dr. N. F. Ticehurst's splendid article, illustrated by six photographs by the author, entitled "*Some Notes on Nightingales*" in that for November, all of which papers make good reading. In addition to valuable contributions by Mr. J. B. Nichols and others are numerous interesting short notes to which it would be impossible here to refer in detail. A. G. B.

## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

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### NESTING OF THE BLACK-NECKED CROWNED CRANE.

In *The Field*, of December 14, appears a letter above the initials D. McD. describing the successful breeding of a pair of *Balearica pavoninæ* at Logan, Strauraer, Wigtonshire. "The nest, raised some inches above the ground, was in the centre of a large patch of bullrushes in swampy ground on the side of a loch. Three eggs were laid. The birds began to sit on Aug. 12, and one egg was hatched on Sept. 9; the other two unfortunately were bad. The birds took it in turn to incubate, the one off duty flying up to the house to feed, remaining there only a short time. Two days after hatching the parent birds brought the chick on to open grass near the nest. On this ground they spent the whole day busily engaged in catching insects to feed the young bird. When hunting for insects the cranes walk slowly backwards, stamping the ground, doubtless to drive out the insects, which, owing to the cold weather, are somewhat scarce."

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### THE SOCIETY'S MEDAL.

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Mr. W. E. Teschemaker has successfully bred the Whinchat (*Pratincola rubetra*) an account of which appeared in the November number.

Miss Drummond has had similar success with the Grand Eclectus Parrot (*Eclectus roratus*) and Dr. M. Amsler, with the Hooded Siskin (*Chrysomitris cucullata*), accounts being published in the December issue. In the present number Mr. Astley records the successful breeding in his aviaries of the Hooded Parrakeet (*Psephotus cucullatus*).

All these cases appear to be the first on record of the species breeding in captivity in this country, and it is proposed to award a medal in each case.

Any member or reader knowing of a previous instance is requested to communicate at once with the Hon. Business Secretary.

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NEW MEMBERS.

Rev. U. H. ALLEN, Hambleton Vicarage, Oakham.

Mr. HERBERT FISHER-ROWE, St. Leonard's Grange, Beaulieu, Hants.

Mr. C. LOVETT, R.R. 10, Nashville, Tenn., U.S.A.

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION.

Mr. J. L. GROSSMITH, The Grange, Bickley, Kent.

*Proposed by Mr. ALLEN SILVER.*

Dr. N. S. LUCAS, 19, Westbourne Terrace, Hyde Park, W.

*Proposed by Mr. D. SETH-SMITH.*

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Pair of Blue Budgerigars, price £12 10/-.

FASEY, "The Oaks," Holly-bush Hill, Snaresbrook, Essex.

Offers wanted for any of the following books, all in perfect condition:—Bound volumes Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 *Avicultural Magazine*; *Parrots in Captivity*, 3 vols. by Greene; *Favourite Foreign Birds* by Greene; *Foreign Bird-Keeping*, Parts 1 and 2, by Butler; *Waxbills, Grassfinches and Mannikins*, by Fillmer; *The Canary Book*, 2 vols, by Wallace; *Birds' Nests and Egg-collecting*, by Kearton.

R. FRANKLIN-HINDLE, 34, Brunswick Road, Liverpool.

Owing to removal to a new home, must part with several birds:—True pair Mexican Blue-crowned Jays (*Cyanocitta coronata*) £8. Three Blue Peak Chaffinches (*Fringilla teydea*), two males, one female, very rare, £5. Bourke's Parrakeets (*Neophema bourkei*), very rare, £5 each. Pair Violet-necked Doves, have bred, female blind one eye, £3 10s. Six American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*), parents breed freely, £2 each. Male Mexican Pine Thrush (*Geocichla pinicola*), extremely rare, £5. 10s. Male Blue-headed Cuban Dove, very rare, £3. 10s. N.B.—No dealers need apply.

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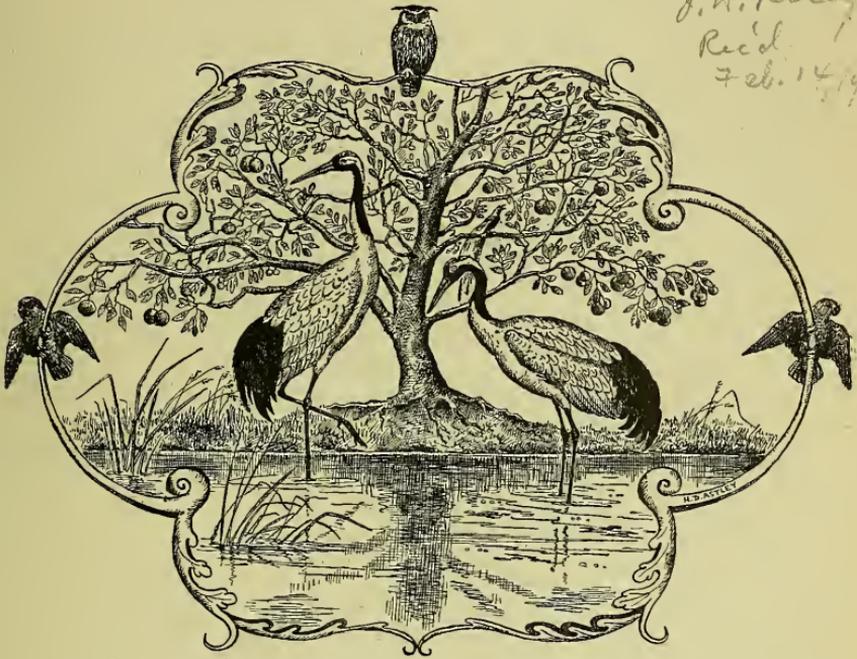
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# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE.

J. H. Riley  
Rec'd  
Feb. 14/1913



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Vol. IV. No. 4

The price of this  
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FEBRUARY,  
1913.—

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## AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.



Persons wishing to join the AVICULTURAL SOCIETY are requested to communicate with either of the Hon. Secretaries or the Editor.

### NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 10/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year, and is payable in advance. The entrance fee is 10/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to members monthly. Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year, on the payment of entrance fee and subscription.

All MSS. for publication in the Magazine, Books for Review, and Private Advertisements should be addressed to the Editor, Mr. HUBERT D. ASTLEY, Benham Valence, Newbury.

All Queries respecting Birds (except *post mortem* cases) should be addressed to the Honorary Correspondence Secretary, Dr. A. G. BUTLER, 124, Beckenham Road, Beckenham, Kent.

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THE MEXICAN PINE THRUSH *Geothlypis pinicola*

West, Newman chr.

# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

*Third Series.*—Vol. IV.—No 4 —All rights reserved. FEBRUARY, 1913.

## THE MEXICAN PIED GROUND THRUSH.

*Geocichla pinicola* (SCLATER).

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

I believe I am possibly the first to possess living specimens of this Thrush in Europe.

A pair was sent me from Germany in the autumn of 1911, and these birds moulted and were extremely healthy, while in the summer of 1912 they were killed through being given unclean gentles, which at the same time were the cause of the death of a fine pair of American Bluebirds with their one young one, which had left the nest. Such carelessness and neglect of proper care will, I trust, be a lesson to my bird-keeper, whom I had actually warned of the danger.

The Pied Ground Thrush is not nearly so active a bird as his near relative, the Orange-headed (*Geocichla citrina*), neither have I ever heard it sing.

My pair would sit in a lethargic way, and became too fat in consequence; and when they did fly, they flew heavily, although in perfect plumage. Their legs are not so long as in most of the *Geocichlæ*, and to call them Ground Thrushes seems to me a misnomer, for that is just the place where they do not seem to be at their ease; they were always perching when they could.

They uttered two notes, one a sharp squeak, which seemed to be a note of warning or alarm; the other a much more melodious one, sounding like a railway-guard's whistle blown softly and shortly.

They are Thrushes which seem naturally tame, for I have

lately received two more, both of which I am almost sure are males; for both are dark, and the female is easily distinguished from the male, by being of a much lighter shade of brown throughout.

The Mexican Pied Thrush is found in the Valley of Mexico, and up to an altitude of 8,400 feet above the sea level, at which height it breeds. It is an inhabitant of the pine woods.

Localities where it has been found are Tetelco and Coapa, etc. (Valley of Mexico); Real del Monte, Hidalgo. Amula, Guerrero; Sierra Nayarit, etc.

There is apparently no difference between the summer and autumn plumage, but Seebohm remarks—Monograph of the Turdidæ, Vol. I., p. 96—that freshly-moulted birds are somewhat more tinged with ochraceous buff on the abdomen and under tail-coverts. *Geocichla pinicola* resembles the Indian Pied Ground Thrush (G. Wardi), and the Siberian, but is not so strongly and handsomely marked.

This Thrush is about the size of a Song Thrush. Both with my first pair and my present ones, when I first received them, they hopped out of their travelling cage in the bird-room, making themselves quite at home, and evincing no shyness at all, taking meal-worms from the fingers almost at once. But to me they are not so attractive as the Orange-headed Ground Thrush, one tame male of which species lives in a cage in my bedroom, where he flies about when I am dressing of a morning, and emits his ringing and melodious notes, seated on the edge of my dressing-table. By the beginning of December he is in full song, and as soon as the room is light enough with the grey dawn creeping in, he tunes up. And how he splashes in a green basin put as his bath on the floor! A charming pet. His orange head and breast become brighter each moult: it is curious why some birds, like the Sepoy Finch, the Crossbill, etc. should on the contrary lose their colour, no matter how they are fed.

I had looked forward to my defunct pair of Mexican Pied Thrushes breeding, and now that I have received what I believe to be two males, my hopes are deferred!

I regret having so little to record about a species which is so rarely imported.

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## THE WHINCHAT AS A SONG-BIRD.

By W. E. TESCHEMAKER, B.A.

I am told that there is a corner which wants filling in the prospective number of the Magazine, so I am writing a few further notes on the young male Whinchat which I kept for further observation out of the happy family of five reared in the aviary last summer. As I think I remarked recently, it is unfortunate that we are compelled by our Rules to exclude from articles describing the nesting of species all data as to the change of colour and the subsequent history of the young reared, although the latter data may be of even greater interest. Of course one can send supplementary notes, but these form only disconnected observations, losing their context, their freshness and much of their interest.

I kept the young Whinchat for some time after the moult in a cage in the sitting-room. I like to see birds in their proper places, that is to say either in an aviary or in the bird-room; at the same time it is sometimes necessary to have a bird under constant observation, and it is nice to have just one singing bird downstairs, so I find room for this one cage—a home-made, three-compartment affair—in my sitting-room. The Shama occupied two compartments and the Whinchat the remaining one. I did not think much of the Whinchat's song at first: it was low-pitched, somewhat throaty, and had some very unmusical passages, which reminded one of the scolding notes of a Whitethroat, but it gradually increased in volume and began to borrow some of the Shama's tours. Then the Shama, who up to this time had taken no notice of the Whinchat's vocal efforts, tried to silence his rival, whereupon the latter redoubled his efforts, and the result was a tremendous vocal contest which generally lasted from early morning until the lamps were lighted. Just at this interesting stage two Blue-throated Warblers in the aviary began to fight and I was compelled to bring one in and to turn the Whinchat out, in order to make room for it.

Now, although the Whinchat's new quarters consisted of a heated aviary where some Wheatears, Blue-headed Wagtails, etc. were doing well, he almost at once began to fail. One always takes a risk when one shifts a bird which has got into a particular groove

and is doing well in that groove. For one thing bird-society is very cruel to the stranger within its gates—as cruel as human society is to the woman with a past. Moreover, a bird never forgets anything; it pines for the old faces, the old ways; it becomes unhappy and, in next to no time, it becomes ill, though its food, mark you, has not been varied in the smallest particular. In two or three days the Whinchat's wings began to droop and I made a mental note that it required watching. One morning the Whinchat did not come to greet me as usual: I found it in a dark corner leaning against the wire-screen encircling the hot-water pipes. This generally means one of three things. Usually it means that the sufferer is dying, and in that case, if handled, its temperature will be found to be lower than that of one's hand. Or it may mean that the bird has made up its mind to commit hari-kari. It is a well-established fact that when the untutored savage has had a little too much of the noble white man—of his stock-whip, his six-shooter and his whisky—he sometimes squats upon the ground, bends his head, closes his eyes and in a very few hours he has entered the great darkness: all birds have the same faculty. This is one of Mother Nature's good gifts to her children—her happy release.

But the noble white man, having deserted Mother Nature for the tinsel and paint of a strange and deadly thing called Civilization, is no longer the recipient of her good gifts and, when he wishes to commit hari-kari, generally has to make a horrid mess of himself and his immediate surroundings.

The third case I never fully understood until quite recently. One evening I found myself in a sumptuous new Restaurant; everything of the best was there—every thing except customers, who had apparently not yet discovered its merits. I sat in one corner and in the dim distance was one other solitary diner. Standing by their appointed tables were the trim waitresses, each a picture of dull apathy and utter weariness: probably they had been standing there all day with absolutely nothing to do. In the centre was one of those artistic hot-water radiators in cream enamel and, leaning against it, was a motionless and pathetic little figure in dainty cap and apron. I shall always remember that picture—the splendid hall with its vaulted ceiling, its oak-panelled walls and oriental carpets,

the soft glow of the shaded electric lights, the spotless linen, the profound silence and that pathetic little figure, clasping the radiator with one rounded arm and leaning a tired head against its smooth columns. Then I understood why the palatial aviary with its sumptuous appointments is not always a conspicuous success and I realised that the Whinchat, huddled against the hot-water pipe, and the little figure clasping the radiator were one and the same mental phase, though exactly why they both found consolation and support in this way was not so easy to understand, unless perchance it reminded them both of the warmth of a snug little nest, far away from smoky cities, and of happy days long past, which would never return.

I picked up the Whinchat and carried him back to his old home in the sitting-room. In one short week a plump and vigorous little bird, suffering from no definite illness, had become almost a skeleton and was evidently on the very brink of that dark river which no traveller recrosses. Now a sick insectivorous bird of any kind is difficult enough to deal with, but a sick Whinchat is a proposition more difficult than the fifth of Euclid—of evil memory. However, with sympathy, careful handling and that best of all medicines known as ‘little bits,’ he rallied most amazingly. At the end of one week he sang a little, in a fortnight he took the Shama on, in three weeks he had become a really fine performer. I was inclined to regard him as a brilliant exception to the ordinary run of Whinchats, but the other day I took up my copy of Bechstein, in which I found the following (quoted from Sweet):—“This bird may be considered as one of the tenderest of the tribe, being very susceptible to cold. It is one of my greatest favourites. One that I bred from the nest by hand learnt the song of the Whitethroat, the Redstart, Willow-wren, Nightingale, and also that of a Missel Thrush which it frequently heard singing in a garden close by, of this latter song it was so fond that we were frequently obliged to put our favourite out of the room, not being able to bear its loud notes; it was certainly the best bird I ever kept of any kind, singing near the whole year through and varying its song continually; the only fault was its strong voice.”

In the matter of the susceptibility to cold of this species there seem to be the usual exceptions, for our member, Mr. Galloway,

tells me that he has two males now in a cold outdoor aviary doing well and, which is still more notable, in full summer plumage, though he thinks that they moulted at the usual time.

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## SOME SPONTANEOUS VARIATIONS IN MALLARD & MUSCOVY DUCKS.

*Anas boscas and Cairina moschata.*

By FRANK FINN, B.A., F.Z.S.

(Concluded from page 88).

I ought to have mentioned above that the second lot of ducklings from the two domesticated Muscovys alluded to on p. 86 as black with yellow neck-patches in the down, have fledged off exactly as their predecessors with the same down-colour and parentage had done, with brown tippings to the feathers of face and underparts; some of these also had the white neck-spot like the mother, but not all. As I did not pay attention to the inheritance of this point, I cannot give the number of those which showed it.

To return to the question of the significance of these duck-variations; another point they throw light upon is the origin of more striking colouring in a species. When such a point distinguishes both sexes from the young, it is commonly presumed that the male has acquired it first and that then it has been transferred to the female; in the Muscovy duck we can see that both processes are at work, without human or natural selection.

The bare face has indeed been generally transferred to the female in domestication, in whatever part of the world she is kept; at any rate, I have seen it in specimens bred in India, Africa, America and Europe.

On the other hand, the white head, which is often the only abnormal part of the plumage, and looks just as natural as the white head of the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) appears indifferently in both sexes. As it does not appear in the immature plumage, anyone not knowing the true wild Muscovy duck would, I am sure, conclude that this is simply the proper adult colouring of the species in default of evidence to the contrary.

A similar case is furnished by the Andaman Teal (*Nettion albigulare*) all recently captured specimens of which I have seen show a white head (except for the crown and a few scattered feathers) and nape, in both sexes; yet such birds breed young whose heads are at first without white, and have only a white eye-ring developed at first, as the normal bird used to have. Here we have a character suddenly developing in an undomesticated bird.

The variations of the two domesticated ducks also throw light on the phenomena of "warning colours" and "mimicry." They are not at all nearly allied, and the Muscovy is much the more able to look after itself, and is inferior, as human food, to the common duck.

Hence its conspicuous colour and slow flight (the half-wild birds bred in the Zoo showed this well) would be put down as characteristics of a "protected" species if it were an insect. These characteristics are enhanced in domestication by the general change of the black of the male's bare face to red, the common appearance of abnormal white in the plumage, and the frequently yellow (instead of dark) colour of the feet.

At the same time, the common domestic duck, the descendant of the very different-coloured and far more palatable and helpless Mallard, often varies from its normal colouration to resemble the Muscovy, for one often sees black-and-white common ducks coloured and marked very like pied Muscovys. Moreover, white and blue-grey forms of both occur. Yet no one would conclude that the tame Mallard is developing their colours by selection, individuals having colours like Muscovys having escaped the clutches of the poulterer thereby! Thus we need not conclude that if two remotely related species of butterflies or birds in the same district resemble each other that natural selection has brought this about.

Finally, we may learn a lesson as to the development of sex-colouration. I have cited an instance in which the development of the blue-grey colouration in the Muscovy showed a tendency to be limited to the males; if this proved hereditary we could soon raise a strain characterized by blue-grey males and black females, and this would not have been due to the "preference of the females through untold generations," but to an abrupt unexplained development of a

sex-limited colour, and this may well account for many of the sex differences in wild birds.

*Errata.* At the bottom of p. 85, the last two lines should read "normal course of development. The nasal caruncle was still smaller than in the tame bird." (I may mention that the wild drake, not long after he arrived here, lost his very small nasal caruncle and also the red on the eyebrows.) "This" year means 1912.

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## HOODED AND GOLDEN-SHOULDERED PARRAKEETS.

*Psephotus cucullatus* and *P. chrysopterygius*.

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY, M.A., etc.

In *The Field* of the 28th of December, 1912, Mr. Seth-Smith supplied some notes upon these two species of the family of *Psephotus*, of which the Red-rump Parrakeet and the Many-Coloured are two well-known members.

Mr. Seth-Smith perhaps thinks that I confused the Hooded and the Golden-shouldered, but when I wrote to *The Field* to announce the fact that I had successfully bred the former species, I carefully wrote the *Hooded* Golden-shouldered Parrakeet, and gave its title of *Psephotus cucullatus*; but the Natural History Editor omitted the latter and also the title of "Hooded." This beautiful little Parrakeet is quite as Golden-shouldered as its near relative, *P. chrysopterygius*, and consequently I called it the Hooded Golden-shouldered Parrakeet; rather a lengthy name perhaps, but descriptive.

However, be that as it may, the principal point of Mr. Seth-Smith's *Field* note, is that the Hooded Parrakeet is probably synonymous with the Parrakeet described by Professor Collett in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society for 1908, which he named *P. dissimilis*. He described it as nearest to *P. chrysopterygius* (the Golden-Shouldered) but as lacking the yellow band across the forehead; the crown *chestnut*, etc.: and further on he described the crown as *dark chestnut*. In the *Victorian Naturalist*, Feb. 1909,

Mr. North described a parrakeet which agrees perfectly with *P. cucullatus*, *i.e.* as having the crown black, not chestnut.

Mr. Gregory Mathews, who is publishing a great work on the Birds of Australia regards North's *P. cucullatus* as synonymous with Collett's *P. dissimilis*. Mr. Seth-Smith adds that the specimen from which the latter author's description was taken, was probably immature, which would possibly account for the crown being dark chestnut instead of black. "This being so," he adds, "we must in future adopt Professor Collett's name of *Psephotus dissimilis* for this species."

Now to begin with, with all due respect to Professor Collett, *dissimilis* seems to me both inappropriate and non-descriptive, for the word merely means dissimilar-to or different. So that if one were to translate the bird's name into English and call it according to that translation, when any inexperienced stranger perchance on visiting my aviaries were to ask me the name of the hooded parrakeets, I should have to say "That is the 'dissimilar' parrakeet, and it is called so because it is rather different from what is known as the 'golden-shouldered' parrakeet." The Hooded Parrakeet is an appropriate distinction, and it seems a pity as it *is* known as *P. cucullatus* (= hooded) to drop that title. However, I ought to be able to prove this question, having four young of this species in nestling plumage, which as yet resemble the adult female.

When they moult it remains to be seen as to whether the males at once acquire the black hoods or dark chestnut. If the former colour appears, I think it will undoubtedly prove that *P. cucullatus* is not synonymous with *P. dissimilis*, and this will be a fact of great interest. Neither can I help feeling that it will be so, as it is surely very unusual for parrakeets to assume a half-way colouring on the head, with the rest of the plumage as found in the adult bird. I could imagine the hood attaining the full colour perhaps rather gradually, that is not entirely black (or chestnut) at the first change of feathers, but not chestnut the first year, and then black. Nous verrons !

Since the above was written I have received the following note from Mr. Blaauw:—"I had the pair of Hooded Parrakeets which you have, *before* they were in colour, they looked like

“females. The male acquired the *black* hood at once, and there “never was any other colour, so I suppose that your young birds “will do the same.”—H. D. A.

[However inappropriate a name may seem, it must be recognised and adopted providing it was the first name given with a description of the species in a recognised ornithological journal. I quite agree that the name *cucullatus* describes the bird in question better than *dissimilis* does, but that is not the point. If *P. cucullatus* is proved to be the same bird as the one previously described under the name of *P. dissimilis*, then Mr. North's name, proposed in 1909, must give place to Professor Collett's name proposed in 1908, however much we may prefer the one to the other.

Whether the two are really synonymous or not is another matter. I published a note on this subject in this Journal for April 1910, and I considered then that the two must be distinct, as I could not see how the crown of *P. cucullatus* could be described as dark chestnut. There is, however, a tendency in hot climates for black feathers to fade to a rusty tinge, and this may possibly account for Professor Collett mistaking the colour for “dark chestnut.” I am inclined to agree with Mr. Astley that it would be remarkable for the young of a black-crowned species to exhibit a chestnut colour on the crown, although I suggested this as a possibility. But I think the theory of the plumage being faded is more likely to be correct.

Mr. Gregory Mathews, who has for some years been working on the birds of Australia in connection with his great book, tells me that the two names undoubtedly refer to the same bird, which must in future be known as *P. dissimilis*.—D. S.S., ED. *pro tem.*]

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## THE WHITE-THROATED PIGEON.

(*Columba albigularis*).

By T. H. NEWMAN, F.Z.S.

In 1910 an account of the nesting of my White-throated Pigeons appeared in our Magazine. As several points were then left in an unsettled state, and as I believe my birds are still the only specimens in England, and perhaps in Europe, I now venture to send a few additional notes. This magnificent species has proved itself in all ways such an admirable bird in every respect from an avicultural point of view, being surpassed by none in beauty, it is perfectly hardy, freely rearing its young even in the depth of Winter, it is amiable in disposition (exceptionally so

for a Pigeon), it readily adapts itself to confinement, always keeping itself in beautiful condition, is not wild, so does not dash about and knock itself against the wires, as for example the White-crowned Pigeon will often do, and is absolutely no trouble to cater for, being content and thriving on a diet composed chiefly of ordinary maize! So what more can any aviculturist possibly want? For though all praise is due to anyone who can keep a delicate little bird in good health and condition, that would die without the hundred and one little almost hourly attentions needed to keep it alive, yet the only really satisfactory kind of bird which is likely to survive among us in the good time to come, which is promised to us, when no poor bird may be caught and kept in durance vile, is the sort that adapts itself freely to semi-domestication, such as the Canary, Budgerigar, Barbary-dove, etc., etc. To this catalogue very possibly this fine bird,—the White-throated Pigeon,—might be easily added as a notable addition. Perhaps it even might be allowed its liberty, as it is a bird of considerable intelligence, and I notice it is fond of spending much of its time in certain spots, which it seems to regard as its home. But this last point is one that is only conjecture, as the birds are too valuable and my stock too small to allow me to experiment in this way, much as I should like to do so. It must also be borne in mind that such forms of Pigeons as have been domesticated, such as the races of *livia* and *phaenota* are naturally rock dwellers, whereas *albigularis* is a strictly arboreal species, even more so than our familiar Wood-pigeon.

I will now narrate the doings of my birds since I first wrote about them. It may be remembered that I described the rearing of two young birds in 1909. The same pair of old birds nested three times in 1910, hatching three more young ones, all of which were reared. In 1911, the old pair were together with the five, now grown up, young ones. One word in passing about the sex of these young birds, of the four eldest, three were cocks and one a hen, the youngest, which lived for over a year, was not sexed (this is the only bird hatched here which has died so far). During this year twelve eggs were laid

by the old hen, but there were too many of the birds together, for though the birds as a rule do very little fighting, it must be remembered there were now three grown up sons all asserting themselves, and as one of these was paired with the young hen, and this pair were also anxious to set up house-keeping, naturally there was keen competition for the rather limited eligible and desirable nesting sites, in every case after the very first nest, which was made in an elder tree in the open flight; all nesting has taken place on the top of faggots under the glass shelter which looks out towards the open flight, the nest being placed in a corner so as not to be immediately under the glass. None of these twelve eggs hatched, most of them were broken in the disputes, some were certainly fertile, but the majority were not, which I think was due to a curious and rather unusual incident in the economy of the life of a pair of such faithful birds as pigeons, for I found that one of the eldest sons had supplanted his father in the affections of his mother, for although the old cock remained healthy and vigorous, and still is so I am thankful to say at the time of writing, yet the old hen refused to have anything to say to him, literally giving him the cold shoulder whenever he came up to speak to her as he continually did, being naturally hurt by his wife's strange conduct; of course the young cock also behaved unkindly to his father. Can it be wondered that such a misalliance did not prosper, and that no young ones were hatched? At the end of the season I removed the five young birds, when the old hen quietly returned to her original mate, and nesting was resumed during the early part of 1912 as if nothing had happened to interrupt the even tenor of their blissful partnership. The first two attempts were unsuccessful, the first egg being unfertile and the second one being broken, but three more nests each have produced a healthy young one, two being fully reared, the last one, hatched about January 2nd, 1913, being still in the nest, so the old cock who was thrown over two years ago is still proving himself as devoted a parent as ever: the male parent, I have noticed, seems to do nearly all the brooding by day, it is quite an exception to find the hen on the nest. The young bird first leaves the nest when

about three weeks old, by which time it is well feathered, its wings being large but rounded looking as the longer flights are not yet nearly full grown; it is capable of quite sustained flight, though it does not then seem able to distinguish objects well, as it will fly against the netting as readily as to a branch, where it will remain clinging to the wire for some time. The other day I saw what was probably the first attempt of a young bird to explore the outer world. I was outside the aviary, when my attention was drawn to an old cock White-throated Pigeon, perched on a branch, uttering frantic grunts and vigorously waving his wings up and down in a great state of excitement. I then found that his precious infant had just flown from its nest and was clinging to the wire netting.

After its first flight the young bird invariably returns to its nest where it will often remain for two or three days longer before again venturing forth. The reason why so far every egg hatched has been reared may be attributed to the fact that the birds do not nest so frequently as most pigeons do. It so often happens that pigeons in captivity become anxious to nest again before the young of the first nest can look after themselves, so they get neglected and become weak and often die. The White-throated Pigeon seems to lay about every two months, on the average, though, of course, it will do so more often if anything happens to prevent the rearing of the young in one nest. The young do not seem to be driven off when full-grown. When the old pair were with their five young ones, it was not until the young birds were themselves anxious to nest that I noticed the first signs of disagreement, and quite lately, since the last young one has been hatched, almost every day I used to see the former young bird, then about two months old, sitting by the side of its father who was brooding the newly-hatched young one.

All the above refers to a single pair of birds and their young ones, but it may be remembered that there were originally six birds imported. I will now briefly relate the history of the remaining four. I mentioned that three of these birds were heavily marked with white feathers on wings, tail and breast, but that I believed they would in time revert to the normal plumage if they improved in health, as the white feathers were evidently a sign of weakness.

This, I think, was quite borne out by subsequent events, for though none of these birds lived long enough to regain the perfect plumage, one dying on 18th June, 1910, another on 23rd October, 1910, and the third on 25th May, 1911. They were all most certainly much darker with fewer white feathers than they at one time had. I have the skins of two of them, all the white marked feathers seem to be old and worn, whereas the new feathers are all normally coloured.

I believe all three of the white marked birds were cocks, one of them mated with the sixth and last, an ordinary coloured bird, early in March, 1910. Six eggs were laid, three at least being fertile, unfortunately none were hatched. The hen died on 1st February, 1911. It is very much to be regretted that this pair did not rear any young as they would have been so useful to mate with birds from the first pair.

I mentioned above that two of the young birds reared here had mated. The young hen laid her first egg on 20th August, 1910, it was unfertile, but I gave them a young newly-hatched Snow Pigeon (*Columba leuconota*), they kept it alive for about a fortnight, but did not rear it. During 1911, seven eggs were laid, but nearly all were unfertile. In 1912 five eggs were laid, three of which were broken, but the other two hatched, two beautiful young birds having been fully reared, in every way appearing as strong and healthy as any of the others although bred from birds which are brother and sister. My present stock consists of a pair of the original birds, eight more bred from them, and two grandchildren, twelve in all, a beautiful series, which I cannot however regard without a certain, melancholy feeling, for without a further importation of fresh blood, this stock must, after a few years at the most, gradually lose vitality and die out, and when shall we see a fresh importation, for who wants pigeons?

In my first paper I mentioned that the second bird reared in 1909 had thirteen tail feathers instead of the normal twelve, and I wondered if it would still retain them all when it became adult; it is now a fine cock bird and still has thirteen rectrices, he lives with one of his brothers on most friendly terms. This last summer these two birds were most anxious to nest, they built a large substantial nest in which one or the other spent much of its time, the only thing

needed was an egg. They were much pleased when I gave them one, but they did not hatch any young birds.

It may have been noticed that I have not mentioned the number of eggs laid at a sitting in this paper. I have now records of forty eggs, laid by three different pairs of birds, one pair twenty-one, another thirteen and the third six eggs respectively, and in every instance, without a single exception, only one egg has been laid at each sitting. From this fact it often makes it rather difficult to be quite sure of the exact day when the single egg is laid, but from my notes I gather that the duration of incubation is about 17-19 days. The following details will suffice for an example: found an egg laid on the morning of March 20th; on April 6th, the egg was chipped; on April 7th at 10 a.m. the egg was much the same, only rather more chipped; at 4.30 the same afternoon the young one was hatched. I have had eggs laid in every month of the year, the birds seem rather, perhaps, to prefer rearing young in the winter, but they seem ready to nest at any time, except when actually moulting.

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## OUR CRANES.

By Miss R. ALDERSON.

Some six years ago a friend offered to give me a Crane he had brought from Africa. I wanted it, and I did not want it; most people who keep birds will have gone through the same mixed feelings. I had no aviary large enough to keep such a bird in, and to give it full liberty in the garden meant possibly destruction to the flowers. Also it was said to eat fish and this seemed rather a difficulty, so I declined the Crane, though very reluctantly, and feeling terribly ungrateful to my friend. Yet I am sure it is best to say 'no' to an offer of a pet of any kind unless you are sure you are quite happy in having it. Most of us can keep only a limited number, and these should be just the special kinds we really want.

I little thought that in a very short time we should have not one Crane but two. In Jan. 1907, two Crowned Cranes were suddenly sent to us by a friend out in Nigeria, and we could not refuse them as they were already on the way. In Vol. VI. of the Maga-

zine (New Series) page 123, you will find a few notes on this pair of birds, so I must not go over old ground by repeating myself, but just continue their history from where it leaves off.

Of these two birds we still have the hen, so that she has been with us six years, and we do not know how old she was when she came; she has never been ill, and is a very fine bird.

Her grain food for some time now has been wheat only, and she seems to thrive on it. Added to this, there is what she picks up in the garden (and in the summer especially this must amount to a good deal) and a regular supply of black-beetles.

Beetles love darkness and warmth, and are found in great quantities down coal-pits. One of the miners catches the beetles for us in traps, and his little children come every month for "beetle-money." The contents of the traps are emptied into a shallow dripping tin, with a little water in, and from this the beetles cannot escape. Their troubles are short-lived, for the Cranes soon pick them out and eat them. I think the oil in the beetles must act as a sort of feather- tonic on the Cranes, their plumage looks so glossy.

The hen Crowned Crane, "Lady," bids fair to be a sort of avian "Bess of Hardwick," for she has outlived two husbands, and I have no doubt will welcome a third when we can get her one.

We have been unfortunate with our cocks. The original one "Rex" did well for some years, then one day he was noticed to be apart from the hen. As he was generally a perfect shadow to her, and a slave to her every whim—and she is a real tyrant—this seemed very strange, and we soon saw that it was not a quarrel but illness that was the cause. The pretty pink colour in Rex's cheeks began to fade, and a blackish look came over the bare skin, his head and wings drooped, and though he still came out of the aviary every day he looked the picture of sad despair. "Lady" seemed purposely to keep away from him, and if she was troubled she did not show it. As a rule, you will find it very seldom that a sick bird is befriended by a healthy one. The strong seem to shrink from the sick, and leave them to their fate; it is perhaps a law of nature and a survival of the fittest.

One or two instances of the reverse side come into my mind as I write. One of a hen Brush Bronze-wing Pigeon who had one

strong young one in the nest. The second young one—too strong and venturesome—fell out on to the floor below and lay hurt and dying. When I went down to the aviary I found the poor anxious mother-bird brooding the hurt young one on the floor. How her heart must have been torn between the two, but the little injured bird claimed more of her love than the healthy one.

Poor "Rex" had to bear his illness alone. We, of course, got advice for him, and he was given medicine and was hand-fed and for several days he still went about, at first seeming better, then worse. On about the third day I got up very early and went to the aviary to see how he was. I opened the door only to find him stretched on the floor quite dead.

We sent the body up for a *post-mortem* examination and you can imagine what we felt when the answer came that it was diphtheric roup. As well as we could we disinfected the aviary, but we had nowhere else to put the hen so she had to stay where she was, but she kept quite well and went on as usual with her daily life in the garden, just sleeping in the aviary at night.

A little time after this, my brother bought a pair of Demoiselle Cranes thinking they would be company for "Lady," but she took no notice of them and kept to herself. At night we shut her up in the inner part of the aviary as it did not seem wise to leave all three birds together, for the Demoiselles were very young and the Crowned Crane much the stronger bird.

The Demoiselles were bred in Germany, and were only in baby dress when they came to us. Their colour was drab brown, where later it was clear French grey, and the beautiful snowy curling ear-tufts were very undeveloped and not very white.

We called these two birds "Paul" and "Virginie" and soon the former, which was the larger and more upright bird, became very tame and would eat from our hands. "Virginie" came to a sad end only last summer when we had had her for some years. Like the Crowned Cranes the Demoiselles were pinioned and had the run of the garden. One day the two birds were walking about as usual when one of the gardeners noticed that "Virginie" was bleeding under her body. He sent in word to me and I came out to find her still walking about, but with a most fearful cut. The strange part was

that, otherwise, she looked much as usual. I telephoned for the veterinary and he came up quickly, prepared to stitch the injured part, but a very brief examination showed him the case was hopeless, the internal mischief was so great. There was nothing to be done save to put her out of her pain as mercifully and quickly as possible. We never found out the cause of the accident, and can only think the bird tripped over a flower stake. It was all so sudden. In less than an hour all was over, and poor "Paul" our only Demoiselle.

We gave the dead body to a naturalist here and he made the strange discovery that the dead bird was a cock, though much the smaller and feminine looking of the two. "Paul" is a much finer bird and walks with an erect gait. "Virginie" used to mince along with her neck curved, but we noticed that she used to do far the most of the dancing.

In the meantime we had got a second cock Crowned Crane. He was in poor condition when he came, but looked healthy and promised to make a fine bird. For lack of a better name we called him "Beder," which in the native language means the full moon.

It was amusing to see how "Lady" expected from him the same slavish worship which she had from poor "Rex." She would march up the garden thinking the new arrival was following her, and when she at last looked round and found he was taking no great interest in her, she would stop in great perplexity. After a time she gave it up, and became quite ready to give some of the admiration instead of expecting it all for herself, and many were the kisses and caresses the pair bestowed on each other, but always in a very dignified fashion. Their manner of doing it was curious; they would come close together, their beaks almost touching, and gaze into each other's eyes as if transfixed, then would come gentle affectionate dabs with the beak of one on the face of the other, generally ending in the "crown" feathers being smoothed out. They used to make a pretty picture, but they hated even a hand camera, so a photograph was almost an impossibility. But still in some ways "Lady" was decidedly the master. One day I was amused to watch the birds taking their bath. The bath was specially made for them and is large and shallow. "Lady" stepped in first, and after a moment or two "Beder" followed, but this she would not allow. With quiet

determination she literally shouldered him out, and enjoyed her bath entirely alone, whilst "Beder" walked round the outside, catching the splashing on his feathers and trying to pretend it was just as good as being inside.

These two Cranes were very happy together, and the hen welcomed her companion, for I think that she was more lonely than we realised during the few months she was without a mate. But now, unfortunately, she is again a widow. About ten days ago, on January 11th, we had a very heavy snowstorm, it looked like lasting all day, so my brother went out to drive the Cranes into the aviary. As a rule they stay out all weathers, but when it is very severe we put them up. The two Cranes were found in different parts of the garden, and "Beder" was noticed not to be looking quite as bright as usual. He did not, however, seem really ill, so you may imagine what a shock it was to us to find him dead in the aviary next morning. He seemed to have died very quietly, the body was quite stiff, and the beautiful pink colour in the cheeks had faded away. We sent his body up for a *post-mortem* examination, but have not yet heard the result. Poor "Lady" looks lonely, and for a day or two seemed shivering and cold, but she still keeps quite well, and now the snow is nearly gone she can get about better.

Close to us is the Roman Catholic Church, where they have a single bell, not a very musical one. This bell is rung three times a day,—in the early morning, at mid-day, and at night. Whenever the Crowned Cranes heard it they would begin to call; first both calling together, then one after the other, like a pair of horses breaking step. Now "Lady" does the calling alone. Even in the dark the Cranes would do it, but they ceased when the bell ceased. They seldom called at any other time, save when they were frightened, or separated from each other, or when they came up to the house to be fed, or to tell us they considered it time for the aviary door to be opened so that they could go to bed. Fortunately our neighbours rather like the Cranes' call when the bell goes. One lady, who lives close by, but who did not know at the time that we kept any Cranes, mistook the noise for something wrong with the bell, and was much amused when I told her the real cause.

It was very pretty to see the Crowned Cranes dance, they

looked so beautiful, marching up the lawn with their wings held high and stretched to the full, but it made one wish so much that they had not been marred by pinioning. The effect in the spread wing is quite enough to spoil it, though when the wing is in repose it does not show. I do not think the operation is very painful if properly done, and it is, of course, a necessity if the bird is to run loose. The hen Crowned Crane is a great jumper, but does not often indulge in it unless frightened. Sometimes she will have a mad fit and careers up the lawn in wild jumps with outstretched wings and neck. She comes close to the house to be fed, but will not feed from our hands.

After the death of "Virginie," the Demoiselle, we got another mate for "Paul." This new bird "Rudolph" is supposed to be a male, he is still in his drab dress and very young and is aviary bred from abroad. He is rather frightened of "Paul" though they are always together. When first "Rudolph" came he was very inquisitive and if the low windows in the drawing room were left open he would come inside and walk round the room, never breaking anything, but apparently much interested in the pictures. "Paul" would not venture inside, but would stand close to the window giving his call note of fear again and again. Though he displays this anxiety yet to tell the truth he bullies "Rudolph," and in little points, such as helping himself first to feed, he is essentially the master. "Paul" loves to look for long at a time at his reflection in the drawing room windows, and has, I think, a latent taste for music, for he tapped hard on the glass, as an accompaniment, when I was playing the other day.

Both the Demoiselles like Spratt's Pigeon Biscuit (it is sold ground in small pieces, and I was told contains egg) as well as wheat. They have no other grain, but enjoy mealworms, these, however, are only given as a special treat.

Every morning I put two little heaps of pigeon biscuit on the dining room window sill for the Cranes, if I put only one heap "Rudolph" would go short. "Paul" is also very fond of small pieces of bread, and prefers crust to crumb. It is pretty to see him take it through the window from your hand, for when he is pleased he gives happy little grunts of satisfaction whilst eating. He makes

another sound, more like a hiss, that is pretended indignation when I play with him. He will spread his wings at me and make his neck feathers all stand out straight, and puff out his white whiskers and dance about, but it is all fun and show off, for "Paul" and I are very good friends and quite understand one another. He knows quite well that he has only to ask and to have, and that I am always ready to feed him whenever he wants anything. He generally tells me by looking in at the windows, or lingering by the garden door.

Our little broken-beaked Robin comes from his look-out in the hawthorn tree close by to pick up "Paul's" crumbs from the sill. Or, if the window is open he will come inside and help himself if any food is on the table. Sometimes he sits on the back of a chair and gives us a sweet low song, just to show it is not quite all cupboard love.

We have had this Robin now for some years and when first the beak—the upper mandible—was broken it could not pick up food from a *flat* surface, but only if we dropped it amongst grass. The brave little bird weathered that hard time though we feared it would die, and it has never forgotten us. The beak has grown only a little, but it has hardened, so can grasp the food better.

I think every bird lover should have an "aviary Robin" and a "house Robin." The little fellows are there for the asking and by their cheeriness, give us much more than we ever give to them.

The Cranes have a great aversion to cats and are very inquisitive about them, but not at all afraid. They will stalk them amongst the bushes, and the cat generally looks very uncomfortable. I once saw "Paul" keep our little wild squirrel a prisoner up a tree for quite a long time. The squirrel wanted to come down for the food we had put out and chattered with rage and disappointment, while "Paul" with uplifted beak guarded him quite unmoved.

He is a strange bird, the other day I saw him very busy picking up short twigs from the lawn and dropping them just an inch or two away from where he picked them up, there seemed no object at all in what he was doing.

Sometimes "Paul" will pick up a stick and begin to dance with it in his beak. He has one sad fault, he loves to root up

Snowdrop bulbs as if he liked the smell of them, but beyond this and eating the Ribbon grass, the Cranes are not very destructive.

I have got so used to having Cranes that I should not like to be without them now, they seem part of the garden. If you have plenty of space, try one and I think you will agree with me that they are very charming pets.

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## BIRD NOTES FROM THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Little of importance, in the way of birds, has arrived at the Gardens during the past month, but three species appear to be new to the collection—The Mahali Weaver, the Cuban Black Bullfinch and the Pink-browed Rose-finch.

The Mahali Weaver-bird (*Plocepasser mahali*) of which the Zoological Society acquired three specimens by exchange, ranges from Aufola and Matabeleland into Eastern Cape Colony and the Transvaal. The sexes are alike in colour, and in size it about equals the Greenfinch. The top and sides of the head and a band down the side of the throat are black; the back brown, and the underparts, lower back and tail-coverts and a conspicuous streak over the eyes white, the wings being barred with this colour. Dr. Stark describes these birds as inhabiting bushes and mimosa trees, rarely being found in the open country. "Of social habits" he remarks, "it remains in flocks all the year round and breeds in company, several nests being generally built in a single tree." But although of social habits he describes the males as extremely pugnacious, constantly fighting during the spring.

The Cuban Black Bullfinch (*Melopyrrha nigra*) is very closely allied to the little finches of the genus *Spermophila* and it is not very apparent why it should ever have been separated from these. Both sexes are alike, black, with a white bar on the wings. It appears to be new to the Gardens, though I think I have seen it in captivity somewhere. Three specimens have been acquired by purchase.

Mr. St. Quintin has kindly presented a specimen of the Pink-

browed Rose-finch (*Propasser rhodochrous*) which, although new to the Zoological Society's collection, does not appear to be quite new to aviculture, as I hear that others have been imported recently. It is a native of the Himalayas, and when in colour, the male is clothed in rosy-pink hues suffused with brown, the pink colour being particularly bright over the eyes and on the rump. Like all the Rose-finches, however, it loses the pink tint in captivity, its place being taken by a dull yellowish hue.

Since the death of the cock Somali's Ostrich a few months ago, the Zoological Society had been without an Ostrich, but now, thanks to the kind help of Mr. A. C. Minchin, the Director of the Adelaide Zoological Gardens, we have received five very nice young birds of the South African form, *Struthio australis*, which were bred in Australia, where Ostrich farming has been going on successfully for some years. It is to be hoped that these Australian-bred specimens will stand the climate of London better than those from the hot interior of Africa.

The pair of Kolbes' Vultures occupying the large central cage of the Birds of Prey Aviaries have gone to nest as is their habit at this inclement season of the year, and, as I write, the hen has been sitting for about five weeks. On previous occasions they have done the same, but without success. This year we have carefully sheltered the sitting bird with canvas, and we hope that the single egg may hatch. I only hope I may have the pleasure of recording this happy event next month.

D. S-S.

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## REVIEWS.

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### THE HOME-LIFE OF THE TERNS.\*

This is the fourth volume of "The Bird-lovers Home-life Series," a most attractive set of books dealing with British Birds. In it Mr. W. Bickerton gives an account of the five species of Terns

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\**The Home-life of the Terns or Sea Swallows*, photographed and described by W. BICKERTON, F.Z.S. M.B.O.U. London: WITHERBY & Co., 326, High Holborn, W.C. Price 6/- net.

or Sea Swallows which annually visit the British Islands for their nesting season. Mr. Bickerton has studied these five species on their nesting grounds, and in addition to making very valuable notes on their habits, all of which are fully recorded in his book, he has secured a truly wonderful and very beautiful series of photographs, no less than thirty-seven of which have been reproduced, mounted as thirty-two plates in this book.

The rage for collecting eggs of the rarer British birds has been particularly destructive to the Terns in the past, and were it not that some of the species are now strictly protected by the owners of the land upon which they nest, they might ere now have vanished as breeding species. The Sandwich Tern is now steadily increasing in numbers as a breeding bird on the Ravenglass Gulley, thanks to the strict protection afforded it by the owner, Lord Muncaster, a fact which is demonstrated by the numbers of eggs observed annually by the keepers.

The author's account of his search for the rare Roseate Tern is very interesting, but for obvious reasons he refuses to divulge the secret of the locality in which he discovered this prize. The very excellent photographs of this beautiful species prove how successful he was.

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#### THE BRITISH WARBLERS.\*

This beautiful work has now reached its seventh part, in which the author, Mr. Eliot Howard, deals with the life history of the Marsh Warbler, the Great Reed Warbler and the Aquatic Warbler, the greater portion of the present part being devoted to the first of these species.

In reviewing the previous parts of this book we have spoken in very high praise of Mr. Howard's work and of its superb plates by Mr. Grönvold, and we can add little to what has already been said, except that the present part is fully up to the high standard of

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\**The British Warblers, A History with Problems of their Lives*, by G. H. ELIOT HOWARD, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. Illustrated by Henrik Grönvold. London: R. H. PORTER, 7, Princes Street, Cavendish Square, W. Part 7; price 21/- net.

those that have previously appeared. It contains three coloured plates, representing a Garden Warbler feeding its young, the Marsh Warbler and the Subalpine Warbler, and five photogravure plates of the Marsh Warbler in various characteristic attitudes, and its nest. In all of these Mr. Grönvold exhibits his very best work, the portrayal of the plumage being exquisitely soft and the figures wonderfully life-like.

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## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

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### THE MOULT OF IMMATURE BLACK REDSTARTS.

SIR,—When writing recently in the Magazine I suggested that young male Black Redstarts probably assume an eclipse plumage at their first autumnal moult because they are (as far as my limited experience goes) so much darker than adult females in nest feather, but barely distinguishable from the latter in the interval between their first autumnal and first spring moult. I released the adult female when clean moulted and, as I expected, she flew straight away just like a wild bird. The two young males were rather backward and showed no inclination to forage for themselves and, even if they had been a little older and more experienced, they would certainly have perished in the truly appalling weather which we experienced here at the end of August. So I let an exhibitor, who has kept one of my young Stonechats in good trim for almost two years, have them for a few shillings on the understanding that he should report on the change of colour, if any. It may perhaps be of interest to quote briefly from his report which, as will be noted, supports the above conjecture. His letter is dated 7th Nov.: “I very much regret the delay in answering your previous enquiry *re* Blackstarts, but you will understand that this is our busy season and I am at business until 9 p.m. and it is almost 10 p.m. before I get home, so that I have had really very little spare time since the beginning of September. The Blackstarts have both finished their moult and have become very much lighter in colour than when in nest feather. I can hardly describe the colour correctly, but it is a very soft shade of grey. The inner flight feathers have an edging of brown, the same as in the Redstart, but I think that was the colour they had when in nest feather as they did not moult wings or tail. They look very nice just now.”

Whilst on this subject I may mention that one of our members, who was staying last October at Brixham, came over to spend a day with me and told me that he had seen no less than seven Blackstarts in a quarry there one sunny morning. There is a rumour that four of them returned home with him. As has been the case with those I have seen myself on our Devonshire coast, he

found them exceedingly shy ; they refused to look at a mealworm, but succumbed to a very fine wire smeared with bird-lime. In my recent notes I remarked on the shyness of this species and pointed out how remarkable it was that it should frequently become so familiar in the breeding season. A well-known ornithologist, writing recently in a well-known Monthly, describes how he saw one on a small island off our east coast. Apparently he yearned to slay it but the Blackstart was too wide awake for him. He says :—" On Oct. 11th I had a good view with binoculars of a Black Redstart sitting \* (?) on a wall. I had two more views of it at about a hundred yards but it was very wild and would not permit a near approach."

Well done, little Blackstart! I strongly recommend you to adopt the same policy again the next time you meet any ornithologist. Look out for aviculturists too: they are not much better. W. E. TESCHEMAKER.

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#### BREEDING OF THE BLUE BUDGERIGAR IN ENGLAND.

SIR,—My hen went to nest on Monday, Oct. 21st, 1912; she slept in the log for the first time on Oct. 31st and sat very steadily. I did not look in the log but left her entirely alone, as I do not believe in interfering with nesting birds. On Nov. 20th I heard young in the nest (Nov. 29th, temperature in aviary 32°; Nov. 30th, temperature 28°). I first saw the young on Thursday, Dec. 12th; two fine birds which left the log on Dec. 31st and are now flying.

My aviary is an unheated outside structure facing north and east.

I have received some valuable help and information from the well-known specialist, Mr. J. Dewhurst. C. PELHAM SUTTON.

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#### RAIN QUAILS.

SIR,—I bought three Rain Quails in the summer—one cock and two hens. I have no outdoor aviaries here. Do you think they are likely to breed in a run 6 feet long by 4 feet wide and 1 foot high, and could I put them out in the grass by the middle of March? They are at present in a cage in my sitting-room and seem most content and happy.

I should much like to get them to breed but fear this run may not be large enough for a pair. I should be most grateful for your advice, and I hope you will forgive this long letter. HELEN ATHERLEY.

[Rain Quails would not be very likely to breed successfully in the small run you describe. Eggs might be laid, but the hen would probably refuse to sit. They want a place three or four times the size, with long tussocky grass.

You would be wise to wait until April before putting the birds out.—ED.

---

\* An odd thing for the bird to do, especially in October. W.E.T.

## RUSTY-CHEEKED BABBLERS.

SIR,—This extraordinary mild Christmas has had the effect of making a good many of my birds think of nesting. In my largest aviary a pair of Rusty-cheeked Babblers have constructed a nest in their shelter in a dead larch. The nest is a very large one, measuring 18 inches across and 6 inches in depth. In appearance it resembles an extra large and rather untidy Blackbird's nest. The material used was almost entirely the roots and leaves of the artichoke, of which plant a good many were growing in the aviary last summer. These Babblers are quite the most interesting birds I have. They are extremely active and make constant use of their long scimitar-shaped bills in turning over sods, etc., and digging for worms and other insects. A very curious feature connected with them is their call note. The male has a very fluty whistle of two notes, and the female whistles one note only and has a higher pitched one than the males. When the male calls, the female instantly answers, so that the three notes are continuous. In fact, for a long time I thought that all three notes proceeded from the same bird. I have never heard either whistle separately.

Their other song is an inharmonious chatter chiefly used when frightened or angry. I have great hopes that these birds will lay and bring up young. Should they do so, I shall hope to send you full particulars, as I understand that they have not so far been bred in this country.

WM. SHORE BAILY.

January 14th, 1913.

---

 AVICULTURE AND HEALTH.

SIR,—I read in *The Standard* a short time ago a notice on the subject of injury to health from bird-keeping, and the multitudes of disease-germs scattered abroad merely by a pet canary shaking itself. It seems to me to be a matter of extreme importance to Aviculturists, and we should take the warning to heart by observing the most scrupulous cleanliness in the case of our feathered friends, both for their sake and our own, and letting them have as little house atmosphere as possible. Cages can be kept quite wholesome if washed every day regularly, with a little Condy's fluid in the water, and every other day fresh sand and earth thickly laid on the zinc or tin floor of the cage, not merely sprinkled on it. I do not suppose that really careful bird-keeping—in cages and aviaries—injures health, but one can readily imagine the reverse. A bird that bathes in fresh water every day can surely disseminate very few disease-germs! On the other hand, anyone who keeps a bird in a wretched little cage with no means of bathing properly, and the perches and floor of the cage seldom if ever cleaned, is courting disease, and in the interests of the campaign against tuberculosis, this sort of bird-keeping ought to be strictly prohibited by law. A cage that is kept as clean as one's house should be, can be no vehicle for disease. It would be well if the attention of the Sanitary Authorities were turned to the

animal and bird-shops, many of which, judging from the atmosphere in them, must contain masses of disease germs. If bird-dealing were regulated by law and under supervision, it would go far towards the prevention of tuberculosis, besides being a step in the right direction towards stopping the deplorable indiscriminate traffic in birds.

KATHERINE CURREY.

[We quite agree that birds kept in cages should be kept scrupulously clean, chiefly for the sake of the birds themselves. The form of tuberculosis from which birds suffer is quite different from that to which human beings are subject, and we do not think it has ever been proved that the one can be infected by the other. The state in which many bird-dealers' shops are kept is deplorable, but the chief sufferers are the birds and not their human attendants.—ED.]

---

#### RINGING BIRDS.

One of the most delightful and satisfactory branches of Aviculture is that in which birds are kept in a semi-wild state, being allowed to fly freely, and returning to the same place for their food. This method of keeping birds can, of course, only be practised by a few—those who are the fortunate owners of large estates, or who are on such good terms with their neighbours that the latter can be trusted to refrain from shooting the birds. But several Aviculturists in this country have foreign birds flying about their gardens in perfect freedom. I know of a pair of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, the property of one of our members, which have their liberty in some woods in Surrey, returning regularly to their cages for food ; while in Woburn Park there are hundreds of rare birds such as Cranes, Geese, Ducks, Ibises, Black Cockatoos, and even small foreign finches which are not confined in any way.

In such collections some birds are certain either to fly right away at the period of migration, or to stray outside the protected limits, and, in all probability, be shot ; and the object of this letter is to endeavour to induce people who keep their birds thus, to mark them by means of small light rings, so that should such a bird be shot or captured its ownership may be traced. Such rings are made either of aluminium or other non-corrosive metals, in several sizes, suitable for any sized birds, and are so light that they do not in any way inconvenience the wearers. They are most useful in enabling one to determine as to whether an unusual bird visitor is a genuine wild example or one that has escaped from some private collection.

D. S.-S.

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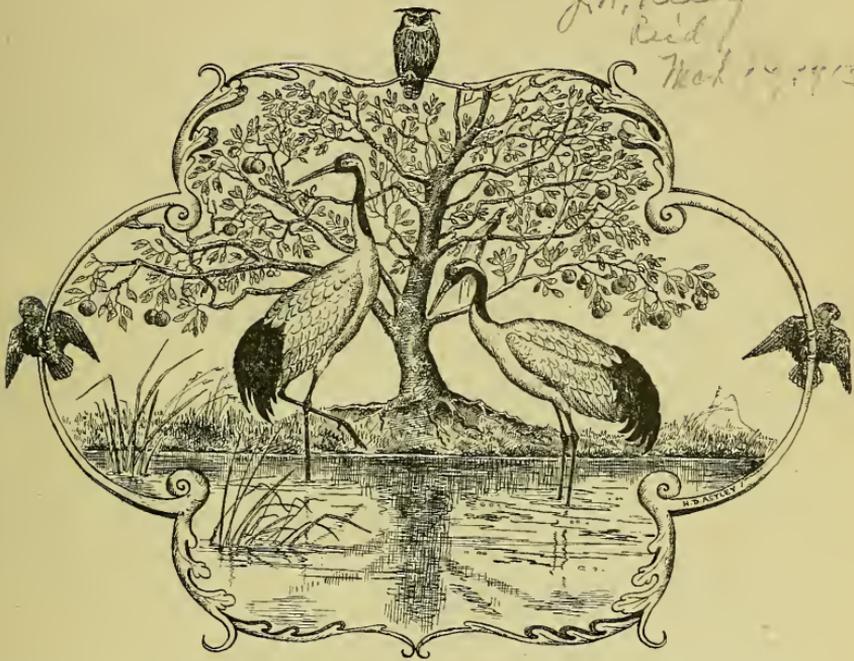
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MARCH, 1913.  


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THE SEXES OF *LIOTHRIX LUTEA*,  
 WITH REMARKS ON MODIFICATIONS OF  
 THE SPECIES.

By ARTHUR G. BUTLER, Ph.D., M.B.O.U., &amp;c.

The external sexual characters of birds have for many years been a fascinating study to me, and I suppose no other living aviculturist has paid anything like the same amount of attention to them as I have. It has always seemed evident to me that, inasmuch as most birds are able to recognise their mates at sight (certain Doves, in which there is a great similarity of plumage in both sexes, being exceptions), our sight only needed education to enable us to discover those differences between male and female which were patent to the birds themselves.

Although I did my best in my little book—"How to sex Cage-Birds" to indicate features by which the sexes of the present species might be identified, I failed to mention all the differences of plumage which actually exist; and, to impress characters of this kind upon the memory, I am sure that nothing is better than an accurate coloured plate; so that I congratulate myself and the Society upon the fact that one has been granted to illustrate the present article.

*Liothrix lutea* is variously known as the "Red-billed Hill-tit," the "Yellow-throated or yellow-bellied Liothrix," the "Pekin Nightingale or Robin" and the "Japanese Robin." Of course, as the last-mentioned name is hopelessly incorrect, the bird being neither a native of Japan nor related to the European Robin, it is

the name in most general use. The best title, that first mentioned above, is given in Jerdon's "Birds of India"; inasmuch as, in many of its attitudes and movements the *Liothrix* much resembles the Tits, although in its wing-shuffling and graminivorous tendency it reminds one of the species of *Accentor*; not that this bird any more than the Hedge-Sparrow limits itself to a seed diet, for it is both frugivorous and insectivorous, while in captivity it devours soft food with avidity.

The late Dr. Sharpe placed *Liothrix* and *Accentor* very near together in the Museum Catalogue; and, partly for this reason, though also on account of a similarity in the behaviour of the two genera, I called *Liothrix* and its near relatives "Accentorine Tits" in my "Foreign Birds for Cage and Aviary," Vol. I, p. 28. On the other hand, Messrs. Hume and Oates regarded *Liothrix* as a Babbler and not very far removed from *Zosterops*, although referable to a distinct Subfamily.

It has been argued that the present species is not Tit-like, inasmuch as it does not hold its prey under its claws in order to pick it to pieces, but rubs it backwards and forwards against its perch, or even against the stiff feathers of its wings or tail after the manner of *Garrulax*: this, I think, is correct, for I well remember on more than one occasion, when I have thrown ants' nests dug up in my garden upon the floor of the aviary where one or more *Liotriges* were confined, that I was astonished at the extraordinary antics which these birds indulged in and which at the time I imagined were due to the ants having climbed upon and bitten the fleshy parts of the wings and tail, whereas doubtless the little insects were in the birds' bills and were being rendered helpless before being swallowed.

However, my object in writing the present article is not to discuss the most appropriate trivial name of this charming songster, nor its rightful position in the classification of birds, but to define the external characters by which the aviculturist may select pairs for breeding purposes, and to comment upon the racial forms of the species.

In Jerdon's "Birds of India" no sexual differences are indicated; thus for many years bird-lovers were obliged to distinguish the sexes entirely by their notes,—the call note of the hen being a

monotonous whistle repeated four or five times, and the reply of the cock a short musical phrase consisting of from seven to nine notes.

Later, as the species became more and more abundant in the bird-market, one naturally wished to be able to distinguish male from female at sight: crowded together in the dealers' cages *Liothrix* is not always ready to respond to the whistled imitation of the female call-note by the would-be purchaser. In Russ' "Handbuch für Vogelliebhaber" no information was available to assist the student, but in his later work "Die Fremdländischen Stubenvögel" Vol. II., published in 1899, detailed descriptions of both sexes were given. Unfortunately both males and females of this species vary so considerably, that one only becomes perplexed when comparing examples in one's possession with such descriptions: they do certainly give one a general idea that males are in all respects brighter than females, which is correct when one compares the brightest examples of each sex, but they do not indicate all the characters by which a brilliantly coloured female can be distinguished from a male not in its most showy plumage.\*

With a view to studying these points more thoroughly I took advantage of an offer made to me by a friendly dealer about 1899 to secure three dozen examples at an extremely low price: and I asked him to pick out the most varied specimens, which he evidently did. Of course I had no intention of keeping the whole thirty-six permanently, therefore when all were in perfect condition I set to work to sort them out into what appeared to be undoubted pairs: these had a most convincing aspect, and I was so satisfied with the result that I let many of my friends have them. The purchasers were well satisfied, both with the beauty of the specimens and the reasonable price, but to my astonishment not one of those three dozen birds ever sang: no doubt the cocks had all been weeded out of the consignment before any of the birds left the hands of the importer, and thus the low price was accounted for: they were all hens.

An experience such as the foregoing would probably dishearten many men; but I hate to be beaten, and therefore still continued to

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\* The white tips to the upper tail-coverts are described as a white band across the tail, and for long I doubted the constancy of that character.

search for differences which might be relied upon. In my book "How to sex Cage-Birds," p. 15, I pointed out one colour-character which appeared to me to be constant, and so far I have seen no reason to change my opinion on that point as regards the Himalayan form; there are, however, other characters which ought to be, and probably are, distinctive and reliable, and one of these has enabled a Sydenham dealer recently to pick out cock birds for his customers without, apparently, a single failure; it is a character noted, but not emphasized, in Russ' description of the male bird; namely, the more yellow tint of the crown.

My friend Mr. Allen Silver kindly procured one of these birds in rough plumage for me: it was not only yellowish-green on the crown but the front of the crown was blotched with yellow feathers more or less abraded. When it had moulted, its inferior size and different coloration seemed to me to indicate at least a well-defined race, if not a distinct species from *L. lutea*:—the crown was somewhat ashy in front, and where the yellowish patches existed in the freshly-imported bird, there appeared after the moult two short whitish streaks, the orbital ellipse and sides of head were, and are, distinctly ashy: but more of this anon.

The following sexual differences in *L. lutea* seem reliable:—Male, when mature, larger than female and with greater width of skull; the bill noticeably shorter when seen in profile, and broader in the middle; crown of a more golden olive colour, especially on the forehead; elliptical orbital streak pale yellow throughout and brighter along its upper edge; throat of a deeper yellow, this colour extending below the orange belt which crosses the fore-chest, the belt itself broader than in the female and of a more decided and brighter rusty-orange hue; primaries with broader yellow margins; central upper tail-coverts more broadly fringed at extremity with white.\*

The colouring of the throat in various females which I have possessed at various times grades from pale brimstone to lemon yellow; the elliptical orbital streak is either ashy throughout or pale

---

\* Russ regarded this character, I think rightly, as the best for distinguishing males from females: it is not wholly absent, as Russ states, from three female skins in my possession, but much narrower.

yellow in front of the eye and ashy behind it; it is likely enough that these differences in individuals may be indicative of age, and that the paler birds are the younger ones, since the only skin I have which shows yellow in front of the eye was nine years in one of my aviaries, dying in 1910: on the other hand they may characterize Indian and Chinese types.

If my present cock bird lives, it will be interesting to see whether succeeding moults will produce a permanent change in the coloration, more especially of the head. It is not rare for old birds to develop white patches on various parts of the plumage, but if such characters exist in young birds they tend to increase in extent with advancing age, and certainly it would be very unusual for the juvenile plumage of a species to be considerably brighter than that of a mature adult.

*Liothrix lutea* has been pretty freely bred in Germany, and the plumages from the nestling down to the fully adult feathering have been carefully observed and noted. Russ says of the young feathering:—"Upper surface ash-grey, also the sides of head and cheeks; wings blackish-grey; each primary with a narrow clear yellow outer edging, through which the coming orange-yellow speculum, that is to say on the third to eighth primary, is already clearly discernible; moreover, the last mentioned primaries have a broad whitish inner border," &c., &c., but nothing is said about yellowish or whitish patches on the crown.

Although at first sight very like the typical Indian form of *L. lutea*, the inferior size of my bird and the various noticeable differences in its colouring seemed at first to indicate something more than what nowadays is distinguished under a trinomial designation as a subspecies; but, after the complete growth of all the rest of the plumage, the whitish streaks gradually disappeared from the crown, which became uniformly golden olive. Whether the growth of the feathers covers the previously revealed pale bases, or whether the colour intensifies as the bird recovers vigour I cannot say; but in our Goldfinch the front of the face after a moult is sometimes silky golden at first, subsequently changing to scarlet.

My present male *Liothrix* differs from the slightly larger Himalayan form in its more yellow-green crown, more slaty-tinted

back, ashy sides to head, including orbital ellipse; paler and more restricted throat-area, owing to the duller and more diffused orange breast-belt; margins of primaries buttercup-yellow and broader towards the tips; wing speculum apparently of a brighter crimson; belt crossing secondaries behind speculum buttercup-yellow and rather narrow: white terminal fringe to upper tail-coverts well defined; feet ochreous. Its song is shorter and less varied.

Not possessing the volume of the Museum Catalogue in which *Liothrix* appears, and believing that no species but *L. lutea* was known to science, I wrote to Mr. Charles Chubb at the Museum and asked him whether he knew of any record of a species or subspecies nearly related to *L. lutea*. In reply he said he knew of no new species of *Liothrix* having been described, but he enclosed a note published by the late Henry Seebohm in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society, in which that author argues that the Himalayan bird is distinct from the Chinese one, which is typical of *L. lutea*, Scopoli (the original specimen having come from Nankin), and should take the name *L. calipyga* (Hodgson, Indian Review, 1838, p. 88).

Of the Chinese bird Seebohm says two examples procured by Herr Baun at Puching differ from Himalayan examples in having "a much more forked tail, the outer feathers being '35 inch longer than the central feathers, instead of only '15 inch. The red patch on the wing is almost as rich, whilst the red on the outer webs of the two innermost primaries is almost as pale as in *Liothrix argenteauris*. The tertials of the Chinese species are slaty green, like those of *Liothrix argenteauris*, instead of being rufous green, and the general colour of the upper parts is of a bluer green than in *Liothrix calipyga*."

Although some of the above-mentioned characters might possibly not be perfectly reliable, in a species which undoubtedly becomes more richly coloured as age advances; it is highly probable that the majority of them have a local value. My bird, though it seems more nearly to approach the description of the Chinese than the Indian bird, seems to be in some respects rather different from either of them: and might prove, if we knew its habitat, to represent another race of the species. It is probable that Chinese birds

reach us through the Japanese market, and thus have given rise to the trivial name of "Japanese Robin."\*

I asked Mr. Silver to try to discover the origin of the consignment in which my bird arrived, and he writes:—"I am sorry to say that I cannot get reliable particulars concerning the batch of Hill Tits, in which came our birds."

"Clarke, of Sydenham, selected them from a June consignment at Luer's, of Walworth: I telephoned young Luer this evening and he said they were all a Marseilles lot, but could not, of course, say more about them. He promised me that if he can get any further information from his Continental dealer, he will advise me later."

Thus, for the present at any rate, we can get no nearer to the origin of this interesting form.

Since, according to Darwin, common and widely-distributed species vary most, it should surprise nobody to find, not two only, but many local races, of the Red-billed Hill-Tit.

In conclusion, as one who, through over-zeal was tempted to give a distinctive name to this Hill-Tit, let me caution my brother aviculturists not to attempt to risk adding to the synonymy of ornithological literature by naming and describing living birds. No bird is reliable until it is dead, its plumage may change more or less at any moult. In 1907 I described and figured what I believed, and still believe, to be the insular form of *Icterus vulgaris*, chiefly relying upon its pale colouring, as Ridgway did in the case of *I. xanthornus curasoensis*, but, at its next moult it assumed the deeper colouring of the typical Venezuelan form and recently even the naked blue triangle behind the eye has partly extended above and below that organ; nevertheless the more slender build, the pure white wing-belt and the considerably more varied song remain constant. †

The describer of skins may separate the adult and young of the same bird as distinct species and has done so, but he is saved the shock of seeing his work tumble to pieces in a few weeks; on the contrary his supposed new species may be accepted for years, and

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\* I suspect that the illustration in *Bird Notes*, Jan. 1907, was taken from a Chinese bird.

† The pale yellow colouring in *Icterus* appears to be merely a sign of youth.

when the truth comes out nobody blames him, but woe to the man who describes an unstable living model.

As aviculturists it is our duty to note the habits and the changes of plumage in living birds, to clear up the inadvertent errors of our brothers the cabinet-ornithologists ; not to give names to apparently new forms : I regret that I did not realize this fact sooner.

The worst of it is, that even when an aviculturist has carefully noted the gradual development of a young bird into complete adult plumage, and has thereby been able to link together two supposed species without a shadow of doubt, the cabinet worker sometimes refuses to admit the identity of the two, but obstinately ignores the published evidence : such treatment tempts the aviculturist to overstep his legitimate territory and trespass upon that of the museum-man : yet it is not wise to do so, it is far better to leave the naming of doubtful and unsound forms to the student of skins, and expend one's energies upon the more satisfactory and far safer study of bird-life: doubtless when the life-histories of birds have been more intimately studied, many supposed distinct species will prove to be mere transitional plumages or seasonal phases.

When the startling differences which characterize the summer and winter forms of many Butterflies were first made known and proved, probably something approaching one quarter of the recognized species among forms supposed to be nearly related had to sink as seasonal phases. When I became convinced of the truth, I immediately set to work to revise many genera, reducing not a few of my own species to the rank of wet, intermediate, or dry phases.

True science always seeks to make known the exact truth, disregarding such frivolous questions as the sponsorship of species, which (excepting that one must have names to know things by) is less than nothing and vanity. When one has learned the correct names of the different parts of any organism, the multiplication of descriptions becomes almost a mechanical process. One has to assure oneself that a species is new, by patient research, and describe it ; after that there is little more to be done in that branch of zoological work, but living nature is always revealing something fresh.

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## THE GREAT-BILLED RAVEN IN CAPTIVITY.

B. THEO. STEWART.

The pair of Abyssinian Great-billed or Thick-billed Raven recently acquired by the Zoological Society aroused considerable interest among Aviculturists. Very little appears to be generally known concerning the habits, etc., of these remarkable birds, and though my attention was called to a brief account published a short time ago the narrative seems to me to suffer from a lack of personal observation and experience.

Perhaps it is as well to say here that my bird was in my possession before the advent of those mentioned above and was, I believe, the only specimen in a private collection. I have kept Ravens for years and quite fail to see the resemblance either in habits or appearance between the Great-billed Raven and the European kind.

At the first glance the bird appears more *brown* than black. It is *larger* than the common Raven, standing higher on the leg, has a long neck and is more ungainly in shape. The white patch on the lower part of the head, extending down the neck, has a curious woolly look, just as to my thinking the bird has a negroid stare about him altogether, intensified may be by the enormous arched bill which is grooved at the sides, brown at the base, highly polished and terminates in a white hook. The same white hook by the way, when imbrued in blood, gives just the touch of colour which is needed !

I will not pretend to answer the question as to *why* the bird should own such an extraordinarily developed bill, but that it serves whatever purpose nature intended it to I have no doubt. That it is *not* the powerful offensive weapon casual observers believe and stand in awe of, I have had my proof. It lacks the "power behind the blow" of the knife-like appendage sported by its common relative. The gentleman who is always dressed in black !

I have tested its capacity many times on my bare hands ! partly out of curiosity but chiefly because I believe in handling all

birds. I have no sympathy with those people (and how many there are) who show such intense fear of the King of Crows. To be afraid of any *bird*, vicious or otherwise, is an impossible state of affairs.

Owing to the conformation of the beak the bird usually hits sideways and upwards; and whittles away at wood much after the manner of the parrot tribe. It can give a vicious pinch when so disposed and also on occasion draw blood, but really nothing to speak of. My own bird was a very fine specimen and his appearance excited immense interest among the rural population. She was sent in a large crate whose hieroglyphics greatly puzzled the natives. The one who had the honour of delivering the greatest rarity of the age did so in the following words:—"I have brought you ——," here words failed him and he glanced inside for information and tried again. "I've brought the ——," stuck once more and added desperately, "Well, anyhow, I've brought it!"

"Toti" was believed to be a male, but on examination I came to the conclusion that she belonged to the mis-called gentle sex—to my infinite regret—for "the female of the species" does not greatly appeal to me."

She protested violently, both with beak and claws on being handled, croaked dismally while the rapidly changing expression of the eyes showed her anger. She was I found though in fine plumage in very poor condition and had a wound in her breast which exposed the bone and bled freely. Truly she had "suffered a sea change," and taking into account her value might have proved a costly experiment, for the chance of her recovery was doubtful in any but skilled hands, into which, happily for her, she had fallen. I put her for a short time on a special diet, one that I have never found to fail, and she speedily improved. The wound healed slowly (once she reopened it in a blind rage), but she soon showed a change for the better in all respects. She was very shy but not at all vicious and would take food from the hand very nicely. A most intelligent companion, finding her way about the place in a very short time. She felt the cold intensely and her "private house" was always kept at a fairly high temperature. When let out for a run she showed an intense desire to fly up, failing this she jumped, and being a heavy bird she did considerable damage in this way. I fed

her largely on fish, of which she is very fond, and fresh raw meat cut up rather finely.

It is a popular error that Ravens love carrion. Whatever they may do in a state of nature from necessity, in captivity they show no such inclination. My experience of these birds is a very large one and in every instance tainted meat was invariably rejected in favour of fresh. "Toti" used to dip his meat in water—another old favourite rubbed his in earth.

In regard to fruit, of which the Great-billed Raven is said to be fond, all I can say is that "Toti" had a choice of figs, grapes, bananas, dates, etc., and always ignored them. Neither would she touch any small insects, though once she swallowed a spider, by mistake I fancy, as she was yawning! I once put a large black slug in her bowl, she was immensely interested, carefully lifted it out in her powerful (?) bill and gently placed it uninjured on the side of her cage watching it creep away with evident pleasure.

"Toti" was not a large eater by any means. All food not immediately disposed of she carried about carefully concealed and when irritated by the presence of strangers she had a pleasing habit of disgorging it much to their edification. I should have much liked to illustrate this article with some photographs of the bird with a beak, believing as I do that the illustration is always the best thing in any article. My reason for not doing so is best expressed in the Spanish saying, "*Sabe el cuervo mas que el hombre.*"

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## THE TAMENESS OF WILD GEESE.

By INNIS DORRIEN-SMITH.

At my home in the Scilly Isles, immediately in front of the house, divided only by two garden terraces, lies an enclosure of grass land which verges on to a fairly large piece of fresh water. Beyond that, the ground slopes slightly upwards where big stretches of bracken and gorse finally almost meet the sea-shore. From which the fine white sand blows inland, covering the coarse bent and grass, whirled about and heaped up by the big gales which sweep over the Atlantic. Here amongst giant boulders, the Wheatears have their homes,

nesting, too, in rabbit burrows and stone walls; and the charming little Stonechats perch on the summits of the gorse bushes. In the distance, from the windows, the different islands stud the sea's surface, and the big liners go on their way to and fro from England to America and back, beyond the furthest rocks, on the open ocean. On the grass enclosure which leads to the big pool—and the latter is not fifty yards from the house—a pair of Sarus Cranes, some Rheas, etc. walk about, whilst mingling with them when they leave the water, are several species of ducks and geese.

Out on the pool, big companies of Gulls assemble—Herring, Great, and Lesser Black backs—enjoying the fresh water for bathing, afterwards flocking on the grass land on the farther shore to preen and dry their feathers; 200 and 300 together, sometimes giving the appearance of a big patch of snow. Their laughing cries ring through the air when they disperse seawards, whilst an occasional Cormorant flops on to the water to regale itself on eels.

Since the latter part of October (1912) ten wild White-fronted Geese have been living with the various tame Waterfowl, within a stone's throw of the windows of the house. It appears to me an extraordinary thing how soon wild geese become tame, and I wonder if they were left in peace whether they would do so elsewhere as they do here. [I am writing in January].

We have several times, in other winters, had odd White-fronted Geese which took up their abode in the field with the other birds, which are pinioned, but I have never seen so many together making themselves completely at home for so long a time. The paddock is quite a small one, but they pay no attention when one walks across, and continue busily eating grass, allowing one to approach within ten yards of them, one bird only, who is apparently acting as a sentinel, putting up his head to see that all is well.

Even when wild duck shooting is going on, they pay little heed, only rising on the wing to circle round for a few minutes, after which they return to their grazing, or settle on a flat swampy green close by. There were twelve of these wild geese when they first arrived from the far north for the winter, but they foolishly flew over to one of the other islands, from whence they returned reduced to ten. The fate of the other two was pretty certain, for



WHITE-FRONTED GEESE.

Photo by Oxley Grabham.



THE HOME OF THE ANTARCTIC GOOSE.







WHITE-FRONTED GEESE.

two gun shots were heard in the distance! Now they seem to realise that they are safer where they are, and never wander very far. Their wild cries when they rise on the wing and circle round are delightful to hear. A few years ago a White-fronted Goose was taken, for it was so tame that a boy threw a stone at it, and by so doing, captured it; after which it was pinioned and turned out with the other waterfowl, where it is still living happily with its Chinese and Canadian cousins, being quite as tame as they are.

About three or four years ago a Greylag Goose was caught in much the same way. It took a fancy to the Toulouse geese at the farm, and was calmly driven into a wire enclosure, when it too was pinioned, and, as the story books say, has lived happily ever after.

I may say that there are no foxes on the island, so that any kind of waterfowl can be kept on the grass paddock and on the Pool, beyond which they have the run of the sandbanks, of which the Shelduck are especially fond, and the wild Widgeon and Pochards come ashore to feed with the tame ducks.

A few years ago, six or seven Greylag Geese used to come and feed in the field. and we set up various contrivances with nooses of string to try to catch them, but they were too wary and flew away after a stay of a few weeks.

In March I expect that the White-fronted Geese will also disappear and fly to their nesting-home in the far north: but in the meanwhile they will have afforded great pleasure with much interest, and I have hopes that it will be a case of *au revoir*.

[We hope Miss Dorrien-Smith will kindly continue to contribute interesting notes and articles upon birds to be observed in the Scilly Isles.

Mr. Pycraft gives some information of interest with regard to the wild "Grey" Geese in Section X of "The British Bird Book," p. 163, etc.

He writes:—"More than a hundred years ago, perhaps a hundred and fifty would be nearer the mark, the Greylag Goose bred in numbers in our English fens, where the young were annually taken and kept in a more or less reclaimed condition with vast flocks of tame geese, which, it may be remarked, are a domesticated race of this species."

"Darwin, in commenting on this fact, remarks that though the reclamation of the Greylag must date back to very remote times, yet scarcely any animal which has been tamed for so long a period has varied so little, for, save in the case of the white race, these domesticated birds differ but slightly from the wild stock."

“ That the Greylag and the White-fronted Geese are near allies, there can be no doubt, indeed the latter seem positively to have been derived from the former, since it is distinguished therefrom in its exaggeration of features, which in the Greylag might almost escape notice. For it will be remembered that the Graylag shows a more or less distinct line of white round the base of the beak, and indistinct black bars on the chest.”

Nothing is really known with regard to the breeding of the White-fronted Goose in the Arctic regions, although its nest and eggs have been often taken.

Mr. Pycraft continues :—“ Trevor-Battye, however, lifts the veil, so to speak, for a moment, in his most interesting book, ‘ Irbound on Kolguev,’ wherein he cites a case where a Snowy Owl attacked the young of a pair of White-fronted Geese. Both birds came to the rescue. The gander flying right up at the Owl, from the water, struck out with its wings, causing the marauder to beat a retreat.”

In the Don steppes, Alpheraky says he has flushed these geese in swarms of tens of thousands ; but having once risen, the hosts immediately broke up into comparatively small flocks, and flew off, one after the other, either to another part of the steppe or to water, uttering all the time their loud laughing cackle.

It is refreshing to know that one of these little companies has, in the midst of all the indiscriminate slaughter which takes place, been left in peace at Miss Dorrien-Smith’s home in the Seilly Isles.—H. D. A., EDITOR].

## THE SYRIAN BULBUL.

*Pycnonotus xanthoppgus.*

By CONTESSA GIULIA TOMMASI BALDELLI.

I do not remember having read in our Magazine any account of this bird, and as our Editor has asked me to send him some notes for publication, I will begin with some mention of a pair of Bulbuls which are in my possession, hoping that some other Member may supply more information about them and especially about the chances of breeding them.

My Bulbuls were privately imported several years ago from Syria or Palestine, and were in the possession of Dr. B. who kindly allowed me to see them. He kept them in his bedroom where they flew about from one article of furniture to another and seemed fairly tame. The room was spacious, but neither light nor airy, and I wondered that they kept in such good condition. After the

doctor's death, they passed into the hands of a friend of mine who placed them in his aviary, where they occasionally brained some of the small exotic Finches. He then presented them to me and I have now had them for three or four years. They are delightful birds, so bright and nimble, and though soberly clad, are elegantly shaped and keep themselves in perfect trim.

They are very lively, and occasionally slip out of their cage, and then it is a regular game of hide and seek. They fly about perching on my head or on my finger, pecking it viciously, but without allowing themselves to be caught and chattering all the time like angry sparrows. Then they unexpectedly disappear and it is impossible to find them, when suddenly they dart out of their hiding place and seem to mock me. One day after seeking one in vain for a long time I found him at the bottom of an empty water pail under a table, where he crouched so flatly that it was difficult to see him.

I keep them in a large cage with a movable partition; sometimes they live peacefully together, while at times they fight and have to be separated. They look perfectly alike in size, shape and colour, and until last spring I thought they were two cocks, but one day one of them seemed very puffy and altogether ailing. Its former owner advised me to remove the partition and allow the birds to be together saying that the little creature was melancholy and wanted to be with its companion. I followed his advice and the birds flew to each other and petted each other affectionately. Alas! in less than an hour's time one of them was crouching half dead at the bottom of the cage and a heap of feathers littered the floor. It was so badly hurt that I thought it would die before the end of the day, but applications of Pond's Extract of Hamamelis healed its poor little inflamed head, and the very next day (18th March) to my surprise, it laid an egg. After this it gradually recovered and in time clothed itself with new feathers; the wing feathers had all been plucked off.

On the 17th of April it laid a second egg, and it continued to lay during May and June no less than eighteen eggs. I tried different kinds of nests, placed heather, grass, hay, etc. in the cage, but it preferred to drop the eggs from the perch, consequently breaking

them. It amused itself with the nesting materials, sometimes filling its bath with them, but showed no disposition to build and still less to sit. The eggs are dark with purplish stains as if they had been dipped in red wine. I would like to try the birds in an aviary but am afraid of the cock murdering the hen. Can some Member tell me if Bulbuls have ever bred in captivity and under what circumstances? As spring is drawing near I would like to make the attempt if possible.

My Bulbuls are fed with bread and milk, fruit and some seed with an occasional meal-worm of which the cock is very fond, while the hen rarely touches them. They are very fond of the kernels of the stone-pine and of cherries, also of pears. They are very intelligent and their bright dark eyes are always on the look out for some dainty. They moult very quickly, one day their head is bare and two or three days after it is covered with dark velvety feathers, Their song is by no means that of a Nightingale, but they have some fine liquid notes, and they chatter a good deal whenever I go near them and come to peck my fingers with open wings and spread-out tails. If I had more time to give them I think they would become very tame and as amusing as my lost pet, my *Ciroquita* (*Sturnus atrigularis*) of which charming bird I will tell another time.

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## MY ANTARCTIC GOOSE.

*Chloëphaga antarctica.*

By F. E. BLAAUW, C.M.Z.S.

During a trip which I took in February, 1911, to Southern Chile, I had the pleasure of seeing a good many Antarctic Geese on the rocks by the water's edge in Smith's channel, etc., and northwards as far as the southern coast of the Island of Chiloe.

The birds were generally seen in pairs, the white male being very conspicuous, whilst it was more difficult to see the female which is blackish brown in colour. On the rocks round the coast of Ascension, the most northern island of the Chonos Archipelago, these birds were particularly numerous, and I occasionally saw as many as seven together. It so happened that the ship which

carried me had to take in some timber at Melinka, which is the little port of that island, and this gave me an opportunity of landing.

Walking cautiously along the sea shore I soon found myself in close proximity to some Antarctic Geese, which were much tamer than I expected. One pair of these birds in particular which were standing on a rock close to the village, allowed me to admire them from a very short distance. This species of goose is stouter and more robustly built than the other members of the genus; and the dazzling white male bird with its lemon coloured legs and feet, large black eyes and black bill, was a most beautiful object. The female is chocolate brown, barred with white on the breast, the shoulders, back and tail are white, the bill is flesh coloured, the legs and feet pale yellow, while a yellowish ring encircles the eyes.

One of the natives, seeing that I was interested in the Kelp Geese, told me that he knew of a young bird in confinement and proposed that I should go and see it, which of course I did, and there sure enough in a garden surrounded by a palisade, I found the young goose, trying to hide itself. The owner was quite ready to sell it, and although I was fully aware of the difficulties that would beset me if I tried to bring the bird home, I could not resist the temptation to do so. A little wooden box was procured and when I handled the bird as I was putting it in, I noticed, to my dismay, that it was as light as a feather!

On my asking how it had been fed, I was told "It will feed on anything but you must not forget to give him Lutsche." Now Lutsche is a kind of Kelp or seaweed which grows on the rocks in the southern part of Chile and on which the Geese feed. This is a thing easily procurable in the Chonos Archipelago, but decidedly difficult to obtain anywhere else except, perhaps, in Santiago, where it is sold in a dried state as human food. A provision of Lutsche was put in the box with the goose and it was taken to the ship. Here my first difficulty began, for the box was too small to keep it in for any length of time and I did not know where else to put it. Fortunately the Captain was a kind man and, seeing my difficulty, he suggested that I should keep it in an empty dog kennel of his on the bridge of the vessel. This proposal I gladly accepted and the

goose after having been put in, at once retired to the furthest corner of the kennel. I then gave it a tin in which was water, bread and Lutsche; the first day it hardly fed at all, but on the second it began to eat the Kelp, carefully avoiding the bread. This, of course, would not do, so I mixed the bread and the Kelp thoroughly together, so that it would be difficult for the bird to eat the one without the other, and after a few days my efforts were rewarded, for the bird began to feed on the bread without the addition of the Kelp.

Of course, during these first few days I paid constant visits to my Goose, and when at last I saw it eating the bread, I was so delighted that I could not help telling my friend the Captain of this event, as he had been much interested in my bird all the time.

He immediately came to look and found the Goose still eating. He, however, being a gigantic Norseman and accustomed to eat things by the bushel, thought the nibbling of the bird at the breadcrumbs in the water a very unsatisfactory way of feeding, and having watched for awhile, he turned away in disgust, saying depreciatingly "I should call that drinking, not eating!"

Happening to go on shore again, I obtained some fresh clover and green cabbage, and after a while the bird began to feed on both. High time too that it should, as the supply of Kelp was quite exhausted. In the meanwhile my Goose had become quite tame. After a voyage of a week I reached Coronel where I had to leave the ship and travel by train to Santiago.

Now the difficulties began in earnest, and I was encouraged by a kind friend who knew the country, who told me that if by chance I should succeed in getting the Goose to Santiago in my compartment, I should certainly fail in carrying it over the Andes to Buenos Ayres! Putting it with my luggage would have meant its certain death, for it would have been thrown about as luggage generally is, whilst at the same time I should have been unable to feed it.

I left the ship at Coronel early in the morning, where I admired a flight of Pelicans in the harbour, and started by train for Concepcion, having successfully, without much difficulty, put the box with the Goose into my compartment. Spending the day in

Concepcion, I left the bird at the railway station, and in the evening took the night express to Santiago. The guard of the train kicked up a shindy (as the English say) on finding the Goose in my compartment, but fortunately some fellow travellers prevailed upon him to overlook my unusual and illegal piece of baggage.

Arriving safely at Santiago on the following morning, I happened to go to a hotel, the manager of which was fortunately kindly disposed towards birds, and he promised to procure me a large box in which the Goose could be placed. Unluckily, in Chile, the final accomplishment of a promise is apt to take place some considerable time after the promise itself, and as the poor Goose had to be freed from its very confined quarters in the small box, I had to turn it out in a corner of the room, where it could rest and feed, both of which it did, rather to my surprise, living alternately in the box and in the room for three days, after which the promised box of larger dimensions arrived.

The next night found me *en route* for Buenos Ayres by the Trans-Andean Railway, and I had to pass the night at Los Andes, where I had the greatest difficulty in getting my luggage and the Goose to the hotel, as there was nothing in the shape of porters, but some diminutive boys, as is usual in Chile. Carrying the Goose, along with some other birds, I tumbled over a deep open drain just in front of the hotel which was in a dark street with no light. Luckily the Goose was none the worse, which was more than I could congratulate *myself* on, but I reached the hotel with my belongings.

Next morning I left for the Andes in a train starting at nine o'clock, and found it crowded with passengers, so that I began to despair as to whether I should be able to take the Goose in my compartment, but my difficulty was overcome through the courtesy of a German official who found me a place in a second-class compartment which was fairly empty.

Except for having to tip the train guard an occasional 'peso' when he came to say that birds were not allowed in a passengers' compartment (and these officials seemed to be gifted with second sight for discovering my goose in a box which was all but closed up), I had no more trouble until I arrived at Puente del Inca (Argentine) when a fresh official boarded the train and insisted upon my poor

Goose being transferred to the luggage van. Now this might not have been so bad in itself, were it not for the irritating habit that the officials have in that part of the world, of apparently, purposely, turning every piece of luggage upside down, which would have been very disastrous for the Goose! With the assistance of some 'pesos' (there is no doubt that money rules the world!) the bird was handled fairly carefully, and at one o'clock in the night I arrived at Mendoza where a sleeping car awaited me for the continuation of my journey to Buenos Ayres, and there I secured my Goose in its box and carried it into my compartment, in spite of a great outcry, but a friendly German, who spoke Spanish fluently, saved the situation, and I am sure his lie was forgiven him, by firmly declaring that I had a special permission, and the Goose was all right so far, but next morning it had to be taken out of the box to let it feed, and whilst its breakfast was in progress, who should come in but the ticket collector who at once made a great outcry at the presence of the Goose in the compartment, whilst I, in my turn, retorted and argued that as I was paying for the whole compartment I had a perfect right to take the goose there if I chose, and that it was no one else's business! I carried my point so far that the man went away swearing that he would have his revenge when we reached Buenos Ayres, but I comforted myself by thinking that once there I could manage to get through somehow or other.

So the Goose and I travelled peacefully after that to Buenos Ayres, arriving after midnight; but hardly had I stepped out of the train when three ferocious-looking officials informed me that I must go to an official in the railway station, leave the Goose, and return in the morning and explain matters.

This of course would never do!

My German friend, who spoke Spanish so fluently, and who had already assisted me, again most kindly came to the fore and to my rescue, with the result that I was permitted to take the Goose away with me by paying eight 'pesos,' which I did not, under the circumstances, begrudge: and at one-thirty a.m. I arrived at my hotel with my luggage and my birds.

Next morning, after much difficulty a place was found on a terrace on the flat roof of the house for my Goose, and it was put

into a large open case provided for the purpose, in which the bird passed four days fairly contentedly.

On the 1st of May the bird was transferred on board the steamship *Zeelandia*, when the final stage of its journey to Europe commenced in a hen house which happened to be on the bridge of the vessel. The Goose was the chief attraction of my menagerie which I was bringing to Europe. The collection included a beautiful specimen of *Phrygilus princetonianus*, which I had caught in Terra del Fuego; a pair of long-billed Parrakeets (*Henicognathus leptorhynchus*), which I had brought from Puerto Varas—on the Lake of Llanquihué, and thirty other birds which I had bought in Buenos Ayres.

I had taken a sackful of green cabbages on board, as a supply of food for the Antarctic Goose, which I hoped would last as far as Lisbon, but the hot weather caused it to last for a shorter time than I had anticipated. so that it was fortunate that I had a supply of dried Lutsche, or Kelp, to fall back upon; which I had brought from Santiago, and which when soaked in water for about an hour, looked almost as good as new, and the Goose ate it greedily.

When the ship was in the neighbourhood of the Equator, the bird seemed somewhat unhappy, but it fed well all the time, and some white feathers began to put in an appearance on its body. The legs also became much more yellow in colour.

On reaching Lisbon I was able to get a fresh supply of green vegetables, and on the 29th May, I had the great satisfaction of landing my bird safely at Amsterdam, and of settling him in his Dutch home at Gooilust on the same day.

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## BIRD NOTES FROM KENT.

By E. G. B. MEADE-WALDO.

During the past summer, two pairs of Lesser Pintailed Sandgrouse (*Pteroclorus exustus*) that I obtained from Mr. Barnby Smith nested and reared their young in our aviaries. The first pair laid the end of April and hatched two of their three eggs on the twenty-third day. These young were successfully reared almost entirely on maw seed, as there were no small seeds of wild weeds sufficiently up

to be of any use at this early date. The second pair nested later, hatching their three eggs early in July. Of these two were reared, incubation in this case only taking 18—19 days.

The procedure of these birds is precisely the same as the Greater Pintailed Sandgrouse (*Pteroclorus alchata*), viz., the female incubates by day, the male by night, and the male soaks his breast with water for the young to drink or rather suck. There is, however, no remarkable change of plumage in *P. exustus* in the breeding season; also, while *P. alchata* is a great eater of green food, *P. exustus* scarcely touches it.

A very old pair of Greater Pintailed Sandgrouse nested and reared two fine young cocks. This was unfortunate, as I have now only one very old hen and plenty of beautiful vigorous cocks, so unless I can procure some females, my Sandgrouse are in danger of coming to an end, after having been maintained practically in one unbroken family for twenty years.

I do not remember to have seen the display of the cock Blue Crowned Hanging Parrot (*Loriculus galgulus*) described, it is rather remarkable. The little male commences by marching backwards and forwards on a branch nodding his head; he then draws all the feathers of his head and neck quite tight, with the exception of the crimson gorget which stands out in a bunch. The scarlet upper tail-coverts and scarlet feathers of the rump and lower back are then raised up, sometimes into one point, sometimes two; it is a wonderful example of making the most of himself. A pair, which we have had for six years, were most determined sitters, the hen sitting practically from April to August, but with no result. The nest is built deep in a hole of an apple tree of green strips of Aucuba leaves, the strips when cut off being conveyed into the nesting-hole by being inserted into the upper tail-coverts and feathers of the rump. The little hen looks very strange flying into her nest with a bunch of green leaves trailing behind her. The female is much larger than the male, and the latter does not get any of his colour until two years old, and not the full colour until four years.

The Waterfowl here can scarcely be considered in confinement, as beyond being fed they are quite unenclosed and look after themselves. We have a great mortality from foxes, and to lessen

this as much as possible many are full-winged and many are half pinioned, about four primary feathers being taken off so that they can get up and fly pretty well, but it is too laborious a business to make them want to migrate.

A pair of half-pinioned Gargany Teal went away and successfully reared eight young ones, all of which flew away in September. Pintails, Gadwall, Wigeon, reared their young. Many Pochards were reared, and the full-winged Mandarins did very well, but not so well as in 1911. They have extended their range a good deal, and I hear of them some miles away, but they are very secretive and show very little, and in this country frequent the most thickly-wooded ponds and pits. Ours practically keep to themselves, rarely coming to feed with other ducks. A very few have been accidentally shot, I have eaten them. They are quite eatable, but I should not call them a good duck; anyhow a male in full plumage seems far too beautiful to pluck and cook!

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## THE HOODED PARRAKEET.

*Psephotus dissimilis* (COLLETT).

By GREGORY M. MATHEWS.

The last number of this Magazine (p. 108) contained a note regarding *P. cucullatus* (North) and *P. chrysopterygius* (Gould) by Mr. Hubert D. Astley.

As there is much of interest in connection with these birds, I offer the following remarks:—When Gould published the beautiful plate of *Psephotus chrysopterygius* in the Birds of Australia, Supplement Plate 64, he wrote: “One of the greatest pleasures enjoyed by the late celebrated botanist, Robert Brown, during the last thirty years of his life, was to now and then exhibit the drawing of a parrot, made by one of the brothers Bauer from a specimen procured somewhere on the north coast of Australia, but of which no specimen was preserved at the time, and none had since been brought to England. It afforded him at times much amusement to exultingly show me this drawing as a bird I could not find, and which I had not included in my great work on the birds of that

country. Now the only way in which I could meet this kind of half-taunt from my friend was to remark that I should get it some day or other ; and I certainly did exult when I received an example from the hands of Mr. Elsey, a year or two prior to Mr. Brown's death. On comparing the bird with the drawing, made at least forty years before, they proved to be so much alike that no doubt remained in my mind as to its having been made from an example of this species."

In the Natural History Department of the British Museum, the drawing referred to by Gould is still preserved, as is also the manuscript description drawn up by Robert Brown at the time the bird was procured.

In Flinder's *Voy. Terra Austr.*, Vol. II., 1844, p. 226, it is recorded that at Melville Bay on Feb. 16th, 1803, "A beautiful species of paroquet not known at Port Jackson was procured." It may be that this refers to this bird as though most of Brown's manuscript bears accurate localities and dates, this one unfortunately only gives "M. ora. septentrionali."

This painting is a most beautiful and accurate one of *P. dissimilis* (Collett), and differs in many details from *P. chrysopterygius*. Gould noted this, as can be gathered from the last sentence ; but the wish to refute Brown probably caused him to minimise such differences.

Over ninety years after Brown met with this bird, it was again collected on the Mary River Northern Territory on May 9th, 1895, by Dr. Dahl. This specimen was described by the late Dr. Collett in the *Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.)* 1898, p. 356, under the name *Psephotus dissimilis*. The description reads : "Forehead, lores, and crown *dark chestnut*," but this is a pure mistake, those parts being *black*. This is written from an examination of the type specimen which is now in my collection at Watford.

Through this erroneous description the bird was redescribed twice afterwards.

A consignment of these birds was brought to Europe *via* Sydney some ten years afterwards. While in Sydney they were examined by Mr. North of the Australia Museum, Sydney, who, noting them as new, described a specimen in the *Victorian Naturalist*,

Vol. XXV., p. 176, 1909, under the name *P. cucullatus*, giving as the vernacular, Black-hooded Parrakeet.

After the birds came to Europe Mr. Blaauw, the well-known aviculturist, bought some; and Mr. Van Oort examining them, also considered them new, knowing nothing of North's action, and re-named the form *P. chrysopterygius blaauwi* in the Notes Leyden Mus., Vol. XXXII., p. 71, 1910.

In the preparation of my Reference List of the Birds of Australia (Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., 1912) it was necessary to examine and compare all the types available. It was obvious that North's bird was the same as Van Oort's, and Mr. Van Oort kindly lent me his type, which was carefully compared by me with Dr. Collett's type and found absolutely identical. Consequently the three names all refer to the same bird, and as Dr. Collett's is the earliest proposed it must be used. As regards the vernacular, however, the well-known name of Hooded Parrakeet can be retained.

Therefore, *Psephotus dissimilis* (Collett) can be still called the Hooded Parrakeet, though North's name, *P. cucullatus*, must be dropped, as well as Van Oort's *P. c. blaauwi*.

[We are glad to have this matter made clear. Museum naturalists often speak as if all points were sure when once the skin of a bird is in the hand, and are inclined to be over-sceptical with regard to one in the bush. Aviculturists may comfort themselves they are not the only ones at fault!

—ED.]

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## BIRD NOTES FROM THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Last month I reported that the pair of Kolbe's Vultures, which occupy the large central aviary in the range devoted to the Birds of Prey, were busily incubating their single egg. Incubation commenced on December 20th last, the birds taking turns in the duty of sitting. On February 12th, fifty-four days later, when we had almost given up all hope of a result, the egg hatched, revealing a chick covered with browish-white down, with a soft beak shaped exactly as in the adults. Two days later, however, both birds were seen off the nest, and a search being made for the chick, only its head and neck were found, its body having been eaten, apparently

by its parents, since they were the only inmates of the enclosure. A great disappointment after having actually hatched a chick. Next time it may be advisable to take the egg away shortly before it is due to hatch and place it in an incubator and attempt to hand-rear the young bird.

The Brush-turkeys have been transferred to a new enclosure, formed by wiring in a fairly large piece of the canal bank at the western end of the North Garden, and the stock has been increased by the addition of four birds, presented by the Duke of Bedford, President of the Zoological Society. They should do well in this enclosure, where they will have ample opportunity of constructing their nesting mounds.

D. S-S.

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## EDITORIAL.

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Several members have kindly promised, in response to my appeal, to send articles and notes for the Magazine; but I still want more 'copy,' so that I need not as Editor live, as it were, from hand to mouth; begging my way along the hard high road from month to month, with only just enough, and perhaps sometimes barely that, to keep me going. I ought not to have to go out into the highways and the hedges, I ought not to be forced to knock at members' doors to tell them I have not sufficient to last me out; or, worse still, to receive so meagre a supply that I must hurriedly pick up what I can on my own account.

And besides food for the Magazine, *I want money*. Money beyond the yearly subscriptions; for otherwise our illustrations cannot be what they should. Let me have sufficient for the Treasurer—Mr. THOMASSET, who has kindly undertaken that office—sufficient for him to write: "We can afford a coloured frontispiece every month." Quite small sums add up into big ones, and some members can give larger ones straight away. The officers of the Society are unpaid, so that those who have kindly given in the past to an Editor's stipend, can transfer that money to other expenses which are necessarily incurred.

Let us all work to keep up the standard of our Magazine, and *remember* that the Avicultural Society was founded for "the study

of British and Foreign birds *in freedom* " as well as in captivity ; so that those who have opportunities of observing wild life amongst birds can write of them in that life.

Send money for the illustration fund.

I will do *my* best, let others do the same! And let *each* member find a new one.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—In order to enable the publishers to send out the Magazine by the 1st of the month, members are asked to kindly send any advertisements, names of proposed members, etc., NOT LATER *than the 24th of each month*, instead of the 26th.

HUBERT D. ASTLEY, *Editor*.

## THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

At a meeting of the Council held on February 7th, the appointment by the Executive Committee of Mr. H. D. Astley as Editor of the Magazine was confirmed and Mr. B. Thomasset was elected Treasurer, the two vacancies being caused by the retirement of Mr. Bonhote, as announced in the January issue of the Magazine. A cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Bonhote for his past services to the Society was unanimously passed.

The Balance Sheet for the year 1911-1912, showing a great improvement in the financial affairs of the Society and duly audited by Mr. F. W. Farmborough, was submitted. R. I. POCKOCK.

## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

### THE MOULT OF IMMATURE BLACK REDSTARTS.

SIR,—I am interested in Mr. W. E. Teschemaker's letter in the last issue on the moult of the Black Redstart (not *Blackstart* please! a lazy abbreviation which is not only incorrect, but might be misleading), but do not quite understand what he means by his "eclipse plumage at their first autumn moult." The young after the first autumn moult (*i.e.* in first winter plumage) are darker, as Mr. Teschemaker points out, than the adult female in nest feather (*i.e.* in breeding plumage); this is because the latter's plumage is worn and faded, whereas that of the bird in autumn is fresh. Mr. Teschemaker refers to the spring moult of this species; so far as I am aware the Black Redstart, like the common Redstart, has *no* spring moult.

The sequence of plumages in this species I believe to be the following:—

1. *Down plumage* present in hatching.
2. *Juvenile plumage* acquired whilst in the nest, also called nestling plumage.
3. *First winter plumage* acquired by moult of *body* feathers at the first autumnal moult. The bird is now in the brown dress.
4. *First summer plumage* (the same feathers as first winter) and allowing for abrasion and fading resembles the winter plumage. In this dress the bird was described by M. Gerbe as a new species and called by him *Ruticilla cairii*; many individuals nest in this plumage.
5. *Second winter plumage* acquired by a *complete* moult, and the males now become really black on the breast for the first time, As there is a considerable variation of plumage in "black" winter males it is possible that they may take another year or even more to attain *perfect* adult plumage. Here is an opportunity for aviculturists to decide this point.
6. *Second summer plumage* resembles the second winter plumage, allowing for abrasion and fading, there being no moult.

CLAUD B. TICEHURST.

Dr. MAURICE AMSLER writes word that his young male HOODED SISKIN (*Spinus cucullatus*), which was hatched in his aviaries at Eton last year, is now, at the age of five months, an almost exact replica of the adult male, except that the black on the latter is still dark brown in the younger one, and the vermilion is replaced by a more orange colour.

The bird is singing well.

\* \* \*

Everything in nature is abnormally early this year. Mr. Astley's BLACK-NECKED SWANS have begun laying, and a pair of the same species at Nuneham Park (Mr. Lewis Harcourt's) are incubating their eggs.

\* \* \*

Mr. WESLEY T. PAGE (Editor of "*Bird Notes*") is publishing a "List of Species and Hybrids which have reared young in captivity in Great Britain," which is to be systematically arranged according to Dr. Gadow's Classification, slightly revised. The book is to be interleaved, for the entry of future records.

\* \* \*

AFRICAN SUNBIRDS, new to aviculture, have just been brought home by Mr. P. Owen. There are four species:—

THE CAPE LONG-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Promerops cafer*). Total length 19·5 inches, of which the tail is 14 inches in the adult male.

THE AMETHYST SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris amethystinus*) a most beautiful species. Emerald green crown. Rose-lilac gorget and upper tail coverts. Body, deep violet black, Total length 5·3 inches.

A third species which has been brought safely to England is the lovely South African WEDGE-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Anthrobaphes violacea*). The total length of adult male 6·5 inches, of which the tail occupies 3·3 inches. Head, neck and uppermost portion of back and wing-coverts, deep metallic green; gorget, metallic green, shading into lilac and steel-blue; underparts, yellow, strongly washed with orange red on the front of the chest and on the tail-coverts. A lighter yellow pectoral tuft at the shoulders.

Mr. Owen is to be congratulated upon the importation and possession of these beautiful Sunbirds.

H. D. A.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS—(Continued from page ii. of cover).

NEW MEMBERS.

- Mr. ROWLAND E. NAVLOR, Marrington Hall, Chirbury, Salop.  
The Hon. GERALD LEGGE, Patshull House, Wolverhampton.  
Mr. W. A. BAINBRIDGE, Harlewood Thorpe, near Staines.

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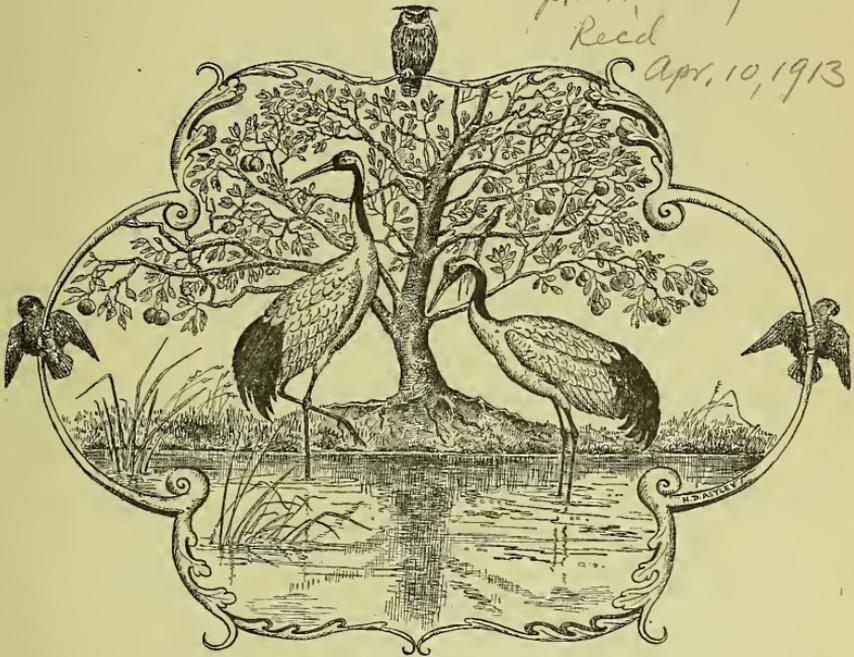
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*J. H. Kiley*  
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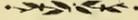
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All Queries respecting Birds (except *post mortem* cases) should be addressed to the Honorary Correspondence Secretary, Dr. A. G. BUTLER, 124, Beckenham Road, Beckenham, Kent.

All other correspondence, should be sent to the Honorary Business Secretary, Mr. R. I. POCOCK; Zoological Society's Gardens, Regent's Park, London, N.W. Any change of address should at once be notified to him.

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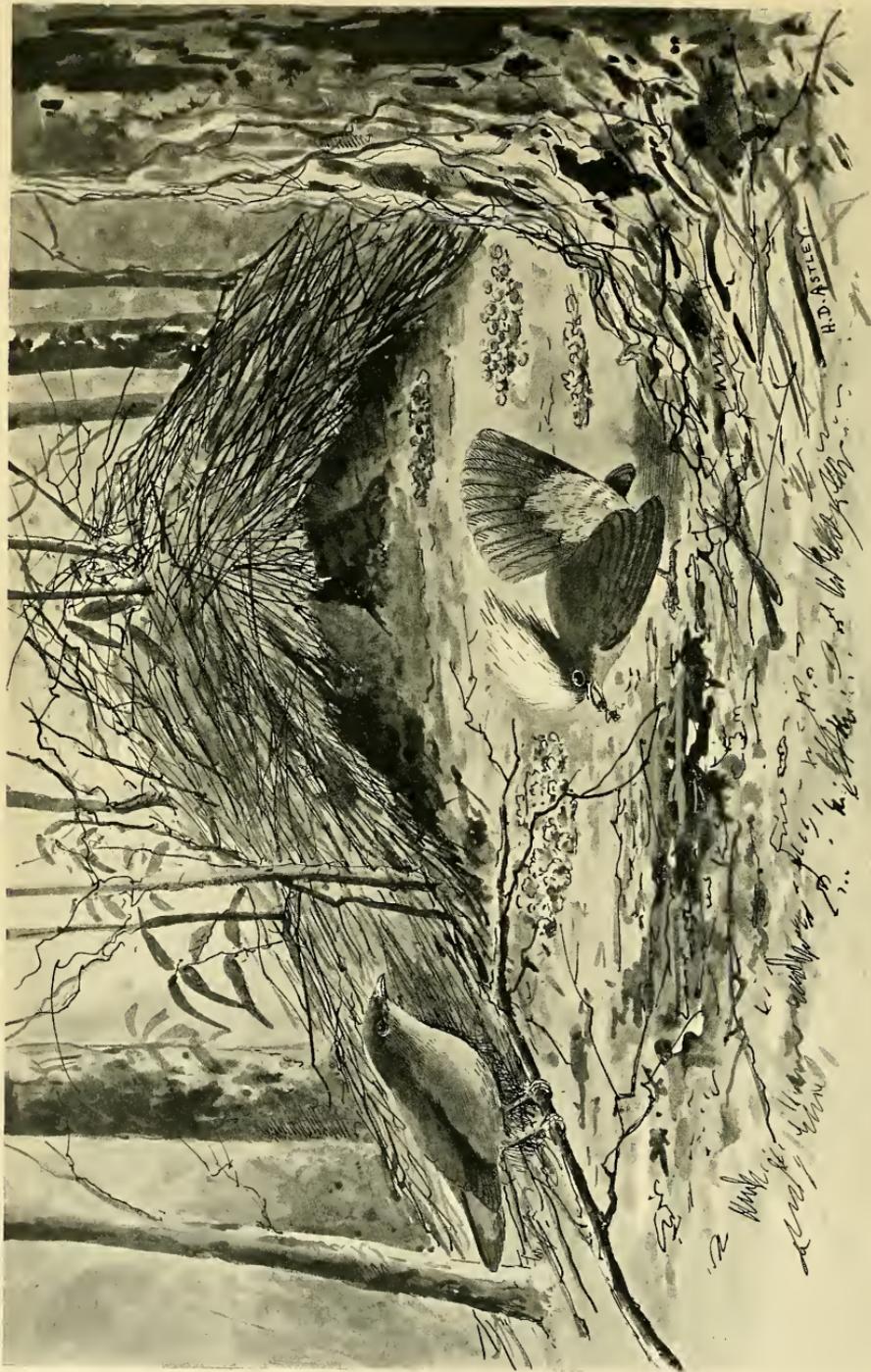
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GARDENER BOWER-BIRDS (*Amblyornis inornata*).  
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After a photo by L. A. Van Oosterzee.

THE

# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

## AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

*Third Series.*—Vol. IV.—No 6.—*All rights reserved.*

APRIL, 1913.

### THE GARDENER BOWER BIRD.

*Amblyornis inornata.*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY, M.A., ETC.

“Inornata”!! What a title! Imagine a thick-set bird, rather larger than a fine Song Thrush, of a rich golden brown, which lightens to a more delicate shade on the underparts, and the male with his resplendent and shining crown of pure gold, *i.e.* of brilliant orange. He should have been called ‘*coronata*’ or something which told of his wondrous skill and love of a garden, but ‘*inornata*’!! He is no more than a peacock.

Of course there was a mistake, and this most interesting bird must have been described and named from the female, and thus this utterly misleading title sticks to him. Give a bird a bad name, and it seems to do so. Of making these names there is no end, and very often no end to their inappropriateness!

Baron von Rosenberg first discovered this wonderful creature, and Dr. Beccari published a description; apparently of the female only, or of an immature male, which description was afterwards published in the *Gardener’s Chronicle* [*that* was appropriate at any rate] of March the 6th, 1878.

Amongst other things, he wrote, “We were on the projecting spur of Mount Arfac (New Guinea). The virgin forest was very beautiful. Scarcely a ray of sunshine penetrated the branches. The ground was almost destitute of vegetation. I found here a new *Balanophora*, like a small orange or a small fungus. I was distracted by the songs and screams of new birds; and every turn

“in the path showed me something new and surprising. I had just killed a small new Marsupial that balanced itself on the stem of a great tree, like a squirrel: and turning round, I suddenly stood before me a most remarkable specimen of the industry of an animal. It was a hut or bower close to a small meadow enamelled with flowers.”

“The whole was on a diminutive scale” (compared with a hut for human habitation). “I immediately recognized the famous nests described by the hunters of Bruijn.”

“We had reached the height of about 4800 feet.”

“I had now full enjoyment in the preparation of my treasure; and I gave orders to my people not to shoot many of the birds. The bower I had first seen was the nearest to my halting place. While I was there, neither host nor hostess was at home. I could not wait for them. My hunters saw them coming and going out, when they watched their movements to shoot them.”

“The *Amblyornis* selects a flat even place round the trunk of a small tree that is as thick as a walking stick. It begins by constructing a kind of cone chiefly of moss of the size of a man’s hand, at the base of the sapling. The trunk becomes the central pillar; and the whole building is supported by it. On the top of the central pillar, twigs are then placed methodically in a radiating manner, resting on the ground, leaving an aperture for the entrance. Thus is obtained a conical and very regular hut. Many other branches are placed transversely in various ways to make the whole quite firm and impermeable. A circular gallery is left between the cone of moss and the outer walls. The whole is nearly three feet in diameter.”

“Before the cottage there is a meadow of moss. This is brought to the spot and kept free from grass, stones, or anything that would offend the eye. On this green tuft, flowers and fruits of pretty colours are placed so as to form an elegant little garden. The objects are very various, but always of vivid colour. There were some fruits of a *Garcinia*, like a small apple. Others were the fruits of *Gardenias* of a deep yellow colour in the interior. I saw also small rosy fruits, and beautiful rosy flowers of a splendid new *Vaccinium* (*Agapetes amblyornithis*)—[named after the bird,

“ who *first* discovered it!! EDITOR]. There were also fungi and “ mottled insects placed on the turf. As soon as the objects are “ faded they are moved away.”

Mr. Sharpe says that the form of the playing-ground, as given by Mr. Goodwin, is totally different from that sketched by Dr. Beccari.

Fully adult males, with the orange crest, have been received by Mr. Walter Rothschild, not only from Arfak, but from the Owen Stanley Mountains in S.E. New Guinea.

There are at any rate two other species, which closely resemble *Amblyornis inornata*, and they are *A. subalaris* and *A. flavifrons*; the latter having been discovered in Dutch New Guinea, but as our Magazine is for the aid and benefit of aviculturists and not so much for those who sit on desks all day in Museums, peering at skins flattened out, stuffed with antiseptic wool, minus eyes, and with discoloured feet and beaks, I will not burden our members with too many details of sub-species and inappropriate nomenclature. I take it that the artistic side of bird-life appeals to them more strongly; along with, where possible, the gathering in of knowledge from those who by experience are able to tell of the birds in life, with their habits, their food, and their many interesting ways of living. We do not decry Museums and bird-skins which are collected for *scientific* researches, it is merely that life appeals to us more than death, that when the spirit of the bird has departed from the body seeking pastures new, that bunch of feathers can no longer attract us aviculturists, indeed more often than not we sit down and weep! It was the life we loved, the agility, the daily cleansing of those feathers in bath and pool and stream, the call notes and the songs ringing in our ears, the putting on and putting off of many a coloured plume, the nesting and the broods, and all that goes to make up life.

And so, although we must needs pay our debt of gratitude to those who have collected as skins what we would fain have had as pets, we aviculturists have our moments when we shrink from the idea of killing: for honestly, had I been the first to look upon that marvellous work of the Gardener Bower Bird, I know full well that I could not have brought myself to shoot the builders of the huts

and the gatherers of the gardens. "Mere mawkish sentiment" I hear our ornithologists of science retort! But life is made up of sentiment, and sentiment produces those miniature huts with their surrounding parterres of fruit and blossom.

People talk of human reasoning and the lower animals' instinct, but although their brain power is not as highly developed as our's, yet they along their own lines reason also. Just as well might it be argued that because we do certain things according to regular habits, that we too act by instinct. It is surely more than what is usually taken to mean instinct, [that is, an unconscious manner of performing certain acts and of living], that enables the Gardener Bower Bird to select certain blossoms and fruits of particular colours with which it adorns its garden, hidden away in the great humid and darkening forests of New Guinea. Does every little 'Gardener' select exactly the same species of orchid, exactly the same kind of fruit, all of exactly the same colour? I doubt it. That the whole species forms the gardens after a certain fixed type is true, just as an Englishman can be stamped as such in comparison with a Frenchman or a Russian, but if we could examine and know each bower and garden, assuredly we should discern a difference, brought about by the individuality, the personality of the builder.

There is nothing which is an exact duplicate of anything else, not even a leaf on a tree, where thousands of its kind grow and draw their life from one source.. And is not this because everything has, however lowly developed the life may be, its own personality as it were? "Instinct in dumb animals," one hears people say. It is reasoning in things that are anything but dumb. Animals which have their own language, apparently to most people as little understood as would be Spanish to those who have never learnt it. A language expressed in birds by very distinct sounds of alarm, warning, affection, and the like—and again each individual differs in tone of voice and power of song.

But my pen has run off the line, and I must bring it back to the subject of the moment.

When that intrepid and wonderfully successful collector, Mr. Goodfellow, brought back from New Guinea some few years ago, four

Gardener Bower Birds, I became their possessor, they were all in immature plumage, easily scared, wild and unapproachable.

In the small aviary in which I put them, one if not two met death by dashing against the wire meshing, but this was due I fancy more to the bullying propensities of the survivors than to terror of human beings. When I was near, they would sit in the bushes like stuffed birds, but if I concealed myself, I sometimes saw one of them unmercifully persecuting another, driving it about with savage scoldings. At last the one victor remained, and was finally presented to our Zoological Society in London, where he is still to be seen in one of the small outer aviaries of the Bird House (January, 1913).

It seems that like the Birds of Paradise, these Bower Birds pass three or four years in immature plumage, for it was not until this Gardener had been in Regent's Park for some time after I had him, that the orange crest appeared.

Mr. Seth-Smith has told me that he has seen the bird display in the earlier hours of the morning, hopping backwards on the ground, and suddenly erecting his splendid crest, with the tail and wings spread at the same moment.

It had been my hope to see a bower built and a garden laid out, but although whilst in my possession, I put in long willow twigs and blossoms of geraniums and other flowers, nothing was done with them.

The Gardener Bower Bird has not attractive manners; from living always in humid and solitary forests, he has apparently developed the nature of a recluse who votes society and social gatherings a bore! but the one in the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens has become quite bold.

If only one *pair* had survived and mated, how intensely interesting it would have been to see what blossoms and what especial colours they preferred and selected for their garden.

Could one but obtain hand-reared birds, this might come about; but mine were caught, and Mr. Goodfellow told me that what attracted them were some bright blue beads, brought out for barter with the natives. Blue beads which were not unlike a beautiful blue berry which he found arranged by the bower. He

also told me that blue and orange seemed favourite colours—the blue berries and an orange orchid.

The birds were very particular as to tidiness and cleanliness—in which not a few humans might with advantage learn a lesson from them!—and if leaves, etc. were scattered on the mossy “meadow,” they were as soon as the opportunity arrived, promptly removed. The ground on which the bower is built is cleared of all refuse and smoothed down.

So the love of gardening is very, very ancient, and the Bower Birds must be highly developed along their own line of evolution.

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## IN PRAISE OF OWLS.

By Miss E. F. CHAWNER.

“Of all the birds that ever I see,  
The owl is the fairest far to me.” *Old Song.*

It is now fifteen years since I started Owl keeping, and I find these birds so charming that I can only wonder so few aviculturists appear to share my enthusiasm. Dealers constantly tell me that there is no demand for Owls, and therefore it is no use to import them.

When one considers that all Owls are beautiful, many quite hardy when once acclimatised, long-lived and easily kept in health, that they are highly intelligent, quickly become tame and often warmly attached to their keepers, their many merits should establish them firmly in the affections of all bird-lovers.

I now possess the following species:—True pairs of Eagle Owls (*Bubo maximus*), Cyprean Scops Owls (*Scops cyprius*); S. American Burrowing Owls (*Speotyto cunicularia*); West Australian Marbled Owls (*Ninox ocellata*); and Sparrow Owls (*Glaucidium passerinum*); also single specimens of Sharpe's Wood Owl (*Syrnium machale*); English Tawny Owl (*Syrnium aluco*); Fernando Po Eagle Owl (*Bubo porusis*), and Mexican Pigmy Owl (*Glaucidium gnome*), all in perfect health and nearly all in perfect plumage.

My Eagle Owls are aviary-bred and are the last brood reared by Mr. Meade-Waldo's celebrated pair of Eagle Owls, now deceased. They are noble birds, perfectly hardy and in beautiful plumage.

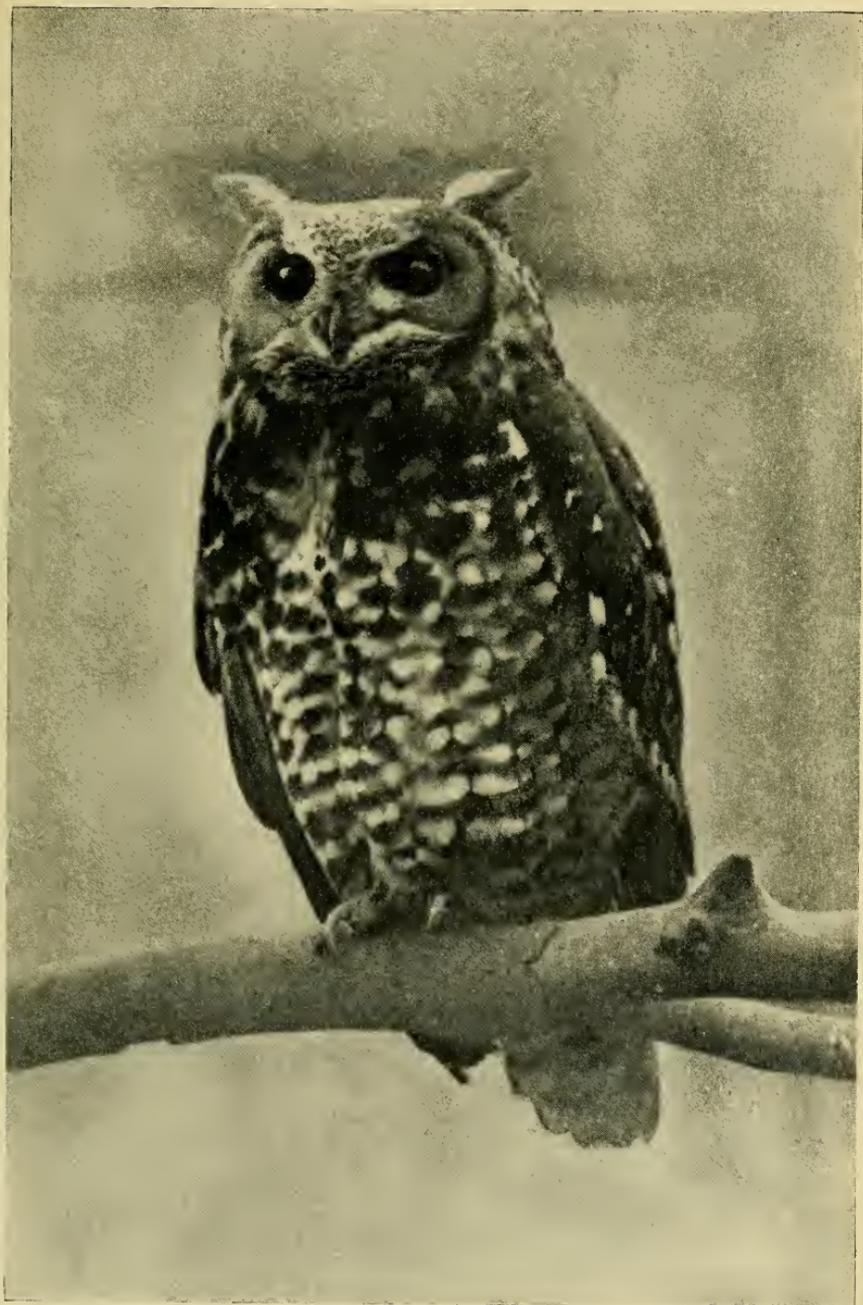


Photo by Commander S. F. S. Rotch, R. N.

SPOTTED EAGLE OWL.



They go to nest every year, but the only fertile egg was accidentally broken a few days before it would have hatched. The hen sits very closely, and is guarded and fed by her mate, who becomes very urgent for tit-bits, such as mice and sparrows, all of which he faithfully carries to his wife and puts into her beak with many polite bows. If she refuses to take it he lays it beside her and returns to his sentry duty. Both are tame and take food from hand, the cock rather likes to be stroked and made a fuss of, but the hen does not permit any familiarities. Their staple food is rabbit, varied by rats, kittens, birds and mice. A friendly poulterer sends me fowls' heads and necks, which are relished as a change, but the birds soon tire of them. Being aviary-bred they have always had dead food, and when a live mouse was once presented to them they showed nearly as much consternation as an old lady would under like circumstances. In Spring, it is amusing to see an impudent pair of Cole Tits calmly fly through the large meshed wire and collect rabbits' fluff to line their nest! The Owls watch the intruders with the utmost interest and benevolence, never attempting to molest or frighten them. Eagle Owls are very fond of bathing, and these mop up the water in their pan like great sponges, till their feathers are so heavy they can scarcely fly up to their lowest perch. They also enjoy sun, and I see them sometimes with spread wings and feathers puffed out enjoying a sun bath till they pant with heat. They are kept in a good-sized aviary, with a shed at the back, where they can be private when they wish, but they like to see all that goes on and pass their remarks. The sight of a cat or dog converts them into animated fire screens, and very magnificent they look with their beautifully marked wings and tails expanded and their orange eyes gleaming, as with hisses and loud snaps they follow every movement of their enemy.

They are now (January) again preparing to nest, that is to say, the cock is making experimental "scrapes" and calling the hen to look at his work. A great deal of hooting is heard from both birds, the cock will generally hoot when I speak to him, but, as far as I can discover, he alone utters a very loud or demoniacal kind of cackle. I do not know its significance, but it forms a sad contrast

to his fine bell-toned call, and I feel thankful he does not often indulge in it.

In a flight cage close by, live two charming little Cyprian Scops Owls, a variety which is said to be restricted to the island of Cyprus. My birds were hand-reared and are delightfully tame, and they deserve (and I hope soon will have) a larger place, where their movements and beautifully variegated plumage can be seen to better advantage. They are believed to be a true pair, and one is certainly a trifle larger than the other, but they otherwise appear to be exactly alike. They are very silent, but the smaller one utters a low croak when hungry. Mealworms are regarded as a great dainty and they take them from my hand with the utmost gentleness. When I received them I was warned that they have enormous appetites and cannot fast for more than a few hours. Next to mealworms, they love a cockchafer grub, and can accommodate seven or eight in their crops at a meal, gulping down surprisingly large ones. As staple food I give them mice or sparrows, according to the state of the larder; they will eat chopped-up rabbit, but prefer the smaller and more natural food.

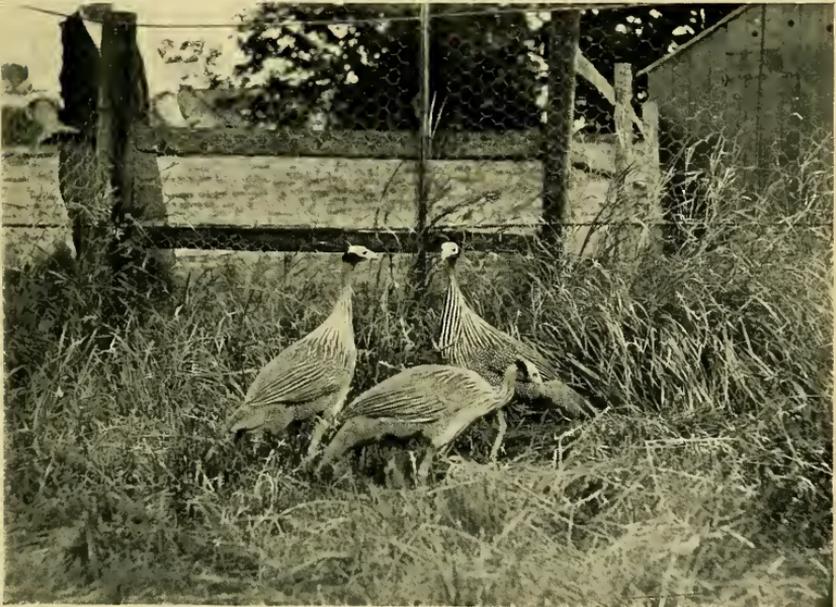
I am much looking forward to seeing them in an aviary instead of a cage, as I expect they will then be less sluggish than they appear at present. They bathe fairly often and keep themselves in very good order, though one had the misfortune some months ago to break the tip of its upper mandible clean off, which put it at a disadvantage in preening its feathers as well as tearing its food. It was glad of help for several weeks, but I am glad to say the damage is nearly repaired. We have so far not had any really severe weather, but I believe these Scops will prove hardy, provided their food is not allowed to freeze before they have satisfied their hunger.

A little further on stands what is known as "the four Owls' house." Herein live a hen English Tawny Owl, a cock (?) Sharpe's Wood Owl, and a true pair of S. American Burrowing Owls. The two Wood Owls are very friendly together, and as the others have their private fastness underneath a large stump, it is hoped that they will continue together in harmony. The Tawny Owl is a hand-reared specimen—the gift of a former Sunday school boy on his enlistment into the Artillery. Since that event it is hard to say



EAGLE OWLS.

Photo by Oxley Grabham.  
(Copyright.)



VULTURINE GUINEA-FOWLS.

Photo by Oxley Grabham.  
(Copyright.)



whether boy or bird is more smartened up. Since she has been allowed a bath the Owl has moulted into a particularly well-marked handsome bird, and when I see her old master swaggering down the village street "on leave," and recall his former intense grubbiness, words fail me wherein to describe how marvellous is the change. "Mrs. Hutchings" is tame and very charming, but Tawny Owls are too well known for me to enlarge upon her management and character.

Sharpe's Wood Owl was also very "rough" when sent to me, and a course of baths and a moult were needed before his great beauty could be perceived. He is a typical Wood Owl in appearance and ways, and has become very confiding, always expecting attention and a tit-bit when his aviary is entered. At first he snatched dreadfully, but he has learnt that it is not good form to pounce with both claws and his beak when a mealworm or cockchafer or even a mouse is held out to him, and he takes the gift in a proper and gentlemanly manner. The Burrowing Owls are not so friendly, nor do I think they will ever become so, but they are pretty and interesting and keep themselves beautifully spruce, though they rarely (if ever) bathe. They also are so well known that no further detail is necessary. The staple food of all these Owls is rabbit; rats, mice and sparrows are given when obtainable.

Next come the Marbled Owls. I have had them for several years; they were imported by Messrs. Wallace and Payne with a large consignment of Australian birds, and I do not think any have since come into the market, though some have been on view in the London Zoological Gardens. I have been told that the Marbled Owl is a variety of the Boobook. Mine are gentle, confiding, and very pretty, especially the hen; about half the size of our Tawny and with the same full, soft plumage; general colour dusky brown, breast lighter streaked with warm brown; the wing coverts and the scapulars are 'marbled' with round white spots; eyes greyish yellow, but sometimes, when the light catches the pupils in a particular way, they look red as rubies. A dark patch just behind the eyes adds very much to their beauty.

The cock cannot fly very well owing to a drooping wing, and is sometimes allowed to come out of the aviary and visit his neigh-

hours. He is then full of importance, and struts up and down with all his feathers puffed out, breathing defiance and slaughter. He dearly loves to be out in heavy rain and dances and plays with the drops until he is thoroughly soaked; his wife, being full-winged, cannot be trusted in this way. Both these birds are particularly fond of mealworms and other insects, and I have seen them pick up and eat full-fed larvæ of the Lime Hawk-moth which drop from the big Lime beside their aviary. They also hunt and eat the large brown spiders which are found underneath rubbish.

These Owls go to nest each year in a tub and lay three or four large white eggs. The hen sits splendidly, but the eggs are always clear: all through the nesting-time she is fed and jealously watched by her mate, but they will allow me to hand in tit-bits, which the hen accepts without leaving the nest or disturbing herself in the slightest: in fact, she will frequently call when she hears me passing, as a hint that she would like to be visited. The usual cry is a double hoot, which sounds very much like a cuckoo gone flat. They are fed on rabbit, young rats, mice and sparrows, and as many cockchafers as I can obtain.

Once the hen escaped and I did not recover her for some weeks, as the man who caught her did not know that she belonged to me. When I got her back she was in good health, for fortunately her captor possesses a sparrow-trap, but her feathers were dragged and filthy. I think if the people who say that Owls do not need water could have seen how that poor little creature rushed to the bath as soon as she was released in her own aviary, they would alter their opinion. I changed the water three times before she was satisfied that evening, and she washed all over again during the night. Some days elapsed before the cock would allow her to approach him, I suppose his feelings were hurt by her elopement. It is curious, considering their intelligence, how incapable an escaped Owl is of providing for itself. Even wild caught specimens seem altogether to lose their hunting instincts when they have been given dead food for a year or so. Also they are, in my experience, quite without the homing instinct which brings doves and small birds back to the place where they have been fed. When an Owl escapes, its only idea seems to be to hide in a thick bush or lofty tree until

dark and then to move on somewhere else. Even the call of its mate does not bring it back, and after a few days it becomes so weak and listless that it can easily be taken by hand; and if not perceived it either falls a prey to a fox or cat, or perishes of starvation.

The next aviary is tenanted by another rarity—a Fernando Po Eagle Owl. This very beautiful bird only lately came into adult plumage, and unfortunately most of his tail and several flight feathers are broken, so he will need another moult before he can do himself justice. When he arrived in England, last March, he was still in down and had experienced very rough treatment. His plumage was ragged and verminous, one leg had been cut to the bone, presumably by a tether, and the other was nearly as bad, consequently his feet and legs were so swollen and tender that he could hardly stand. He could not feed himself and was altogether deplorable.

At this stage he had a white head and breast, fawn coloured back mixed with white, and black barred shoulder patches. The wing-coverts were also fawn. The flight and tail feathers were about half-grown, yellow barred with black. His eyes were, and still are, deep black, very full and fringed with very long eyelashes. Legs and feet bare and white.

On the advice of the Falconer at the King's House—who is a kind friend to all my birds and particularly "gone" on Owls—I padded the perches and kept them continually moist with vinegar and water, and fed the invalid several times a day on such nourishing dainties as pigeons, "warm" young rabbits and sparrows, etc. We sprinkled his feathers with 'Keating's' and provided a bath, of which he took full advantage. Gradually he was coaxed back to health; those feathers which were not broken grew rapidly, his legs fined down and became thickly covered with white feathers barred with black to match his breast. He grew a fine pair of 'horns,' and tortoiseshell feathers took the place of the white down on his head and back. By the end of May he had become a very personable well-clad bird, most of the ragged feathers came away, and those which remained were at any rate clean. It might well be supposed that all this ill treatment would have made the bird either savage or timid, but, as a matter of fact, he is the tamest and most affectionate

creature imaginable. If I stand near his aviary he flies to a perch near the wires and holds his head down to be tickled, and when I go away he calls after me as long as I am in sight. When I go the round of the birds every morning, he looks out for me, calling and watching, and when I unfasten his door and go in, he snuggles up, coaxing and caressing me, catching my coat in his claw lest I should go away before he has had all the petting he desires. I have owned many tame birds, but never one more truly affectionate. But there are two sides to every shield. Let but a strange man approach, and my docile pet is transformed into a hissing, snapping fury. As one visitor truly remarked, at such moments he looks more like a lynx than a bird. We believe that some man has tormented him and he cannot forget it. The aviary boy dare not open his door and changes the water and rakes the floor over from outside, while the Owl glares at him ready for battle. To other birds he is frankly detestable. I once, when much pressed for room, put another Owl in with him and hoped that they would tolerate each other, but if I had left it there, it would have been killed in ten minutes' time. Possibly he would behave more amiably to the opposite sex of his own species, but I do not feel very sanguine about it, and in all probability he will not get the chance, as these Owls rarely come into the market. His voice is curiously weak for his size, a feeble squeak appears to be all that he can do, but he is conversationally inclined and "talks" freely. One of his amusements is to carry a piece of wood about and play with it, usually finishing by throwing it into his bath and jumping in after it. He has a wide spread of wing and needs a good big house.

Just beyond, again in a small square aviary, is a cock Mexican Pigmy Owl. He measures six inches from his beak to the tip of his long tail, which he wags from side to side in the most comical manner. He is so rare that I have never been able to procure a mate for him, and he vainly utters his metallic clink night after night through the breeding season, but the lady never comes. His cry "carries" surprisingly, it sounds like the clink of a small hammer on metal and is uttered nine or ten times in succession, then a short pause, and *da capo*. Poor little Owl! I would so gladly give him the longed for companion!





PIGMY OWL (LIFE SIZE)  
(*Glaucidium passerinum*).

He became mine in 1910 by a lucky chance. I had been to the Zoological Gardens to see the Pearl Spotted Owlets then on view in the Small Birds' House, and my heart was heavy with envy and covetousness. I walked down Oxford Street, meaning to go to Mudies', and suddenly I saw across the street a tiny Owl bobbing up and down in a cage in Wilson's window. I rushed across, and five minutes later the deal was concluded. The shopman told me that the Owl had been brought from Mexico by a ship's captain, and that it was the second he had brought them; the first, a larger bird, probably a female, was already sold. My individual's plumage was somewhat ragged and he had only the stump of a tail to wag, but he was as cheerful and healthy as possible. His plumage has long ago recovered, except two flight feathers, which have never grown and I fear never will. His predominant trait is curiosity. When visitors approach he retires to his private corner, but soon reappears, and, with excited chirps and twitching tail, takes stock of the strangers. Though so small, he is both fierce and courageous: some time ago it was necessary to transfer him to another house and I anticipated some difficulty on account of his extraordinary rapid movements. Pigmy, however, instead of trying to get away from me turned on his back in a fury and defied me, biting and scratching his worst, while his yellow eyes fairly flamed. He eats mice\* and small birds, generally "killing" his food as soon as it is put in, and he may be seen dancing exultantly with the prey tightly clutched by the neck in one foot; he is not a very large eater. He bathes once a day as a rule and very thoroughly.

This list comes to an end with the Sparrow Owls. I have not had them more than two months, and they are still something of distinguished strangers. Mr. A. E. Jamrach obtained them in Switzerland for me. They arrived in beautiful condition, and given ordinary luck should do well. At present they spend much of their time in retreat, but I hope when their new house is completed to see more of them. They are tremendous bathers and good trencher-men. I was advised to cut up their food, but I find they manage it quite well for themselves; the sparrows and mice, which are their daily bread, presenting no difficulty to them. These tiny Owls are smaller even than the Mexican Pigmy, but they twitch their tails like him

and, except that they have speckled heads, they also resemble him in plumage. So far they are silent, so I do not know what their call is like.

A few general remarks may well bring this long article to an end. People invariably put this question when they see the Owls: "How do you get food for them, and isn't it very expensive?" As many rabbits as I require, usually from four to six every week, according as other things come in, can be obtained in the season from the local game-dealer. When wild rabbits are "off" the green-grocer provides tame ones as I require them, and the village boys who keep rabbits are only too pleased to sell me their surplus families; the market price for these is one penny per week up to twelve weeks old. Drowned kittens and ferreted or trapped rats cost a penny a piece, and mice and sparrows (other birds are refused) fetch one halfpenny each. We live on the outskirts of the village and the school children do a brisk trade in these "small deer." A certain old gardener, whose leaf heap abuts on the Forest, brings me quantities of "grub worms," *i.e.* cockchafer and stag beetle larvæ. During May and fern harvest, enough mice are often brought in to feed all the Owls for a couple of days, and Bank Holidays can generally be relied on to produce a string of rats. These last, while making a good change of food for the larger Owls, are not suitable for the Scops and Pigmies, and I have lately contracted for a weekly supply of sparrows to feed these small Owls.

The aviaries are very simple structures, boarded sides and roofs, the latter protected from the wet by corrugated iron; the fronts are made of wire netting. The small Owls' places are wired underneath as well for fear of rats. Inside, a stump or two and some rough perches are all that is necessary, with a barrel or box in a dark corner. All the floors are thickly strewn with coarse road grit. People who are fortunate enough to own a rabbit-warren or some shooting and a couple of sparrow traps, could keep Owls practically for nothing when once the buildings have been put up. The difficulty more often is to find a suitable position, for Owls need plenty of room if they are to be kept in health. My indulgent parent has allowed an ideal position facing south, under large deciduous trees. Here, during summer, the trees provide the

necessary shade, and when the leaves are off, the birds have the benefit of any sun which may be vouchsafed to us, and are protected from north and easterly winds. They do not mind frost I find (as long as their food is not frozen) if they have a dry place and are protected from draughts. Alas! this eligible building site is now fully occupied, and I shall have to close my doors and steel my heart against more Owls.

In conclusion, I may perhaps be allowed to express my deep indebtedness to Mr. Meade-Waldo for his great kindness in naming my Owls for me and advising me as to their treatment. I have never appealed to him in vain, and any success that I may lay claim to is in reality due to his knowledge and generous assistance.

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## SOME EXPERIENCES.

By ALFRED LOCKYER.

The following notes have been penned in response to the Editor's appeal for "copy." They have no scientific value, but may perhaps serve as "padding," and so help to save some forthcoming issue of the *Avicultural Magazine* from undue shrinkage. They deal more with the ethical than the practical side of aviculture.

In the course of a fairly long life, I have seldom been without furred, feathered, or other dependants. The list includes dogs, cats, rabbits, hedgehogs, tortoises, guinea pigs, rats, mice, poultry, pigeons and numerous other birds, but my experience leads to the conclusion that an outdoor aviary, stocked mainly with foreign finches, parakeets, canaries, and other hardy granivorous species, yields the maximum of pleasure with the minimum of trouble. The latter consideration is important where, for half the year, the proprietor can only secure a few minutes of daylight in the early morning on week-days for attendance on his pensioners.

The first domestic aviary seen by the writer when a boy, had previously been a stable, or rather loose box. It was roomy enough, but the lighting arrangements left much to be desired, and it was by no means proof against rats. However, with all its faults, it so captivated his fancy that he there and then resolved to have some-

thing similar at the earliest opportunity. This opportunity did not arrive for many years.

My first aviary was an adaptation of a small, but very lofty, lean-to conservatory. It was what is known as a "builder's conservatory," with a lot of unnecessary woodwork (mainly old material) and much coloured glass, and was quite unsuited for plant-growing. It opened out of a sitting-room, had a concrete floor, with tiled path down the centre, and an outer door leading by a short flight of steps into the garden. This gangway had to be retained, so a light wood framework was erected on either side about seven feet high, covered with small meshed wire-netting, two dwarf doors being included. The top was close boarded, making a capital platform for the birds, and leaving a roomy flight up above, in addition to the space on each side of the path. By way of a beginning, this aviary was furnished with a miscellaneous collection of British seed-eating birds and a few canaries.

Instances of liberated birds returning voluntarily to captivity are by no means rare. It was in connection with this aviary that the following incidents occurred. Among the occupants was a cock Bullfinch, which had got out of condition and seemed to be moulting, so I thought it would be a kind act to give Bully his liberty. Accordingly, he was netted and liberated one fine summer morning, and flew gaily away over the neighbouring gardens, so I naturally supposed I should never see him again. Imagine my astonishment, on returning home in the evening, to find my little friend in the gangway aforesaid, waiting patiently for admittance at one of the small wire doors. The mute appeal could not be resisted; I opened the door an inch or two and he hopped gratefully inside, where he remained for the rest of his days.

On another occasion, a Canary escaped over my shoulder as I was entering the aviary in the morning, and bolted like an arrow. I wasted half-an-hour hunting for him (in lieu of breakfast) but without success, and had then, perforce, to wend my way to the railway station. Remembering the former experience, I placed a dish of seed inside the corridor, leaving the outer door open, and gave instructions for a watch to be kept, so that, in case the bait attracted, the retreat might be cut off. I had not gone far when

I heard a familiar call, and looking up saw the truant perched on the fence of the local recreation ground. He had, of course, recognised me and saluted in the customary manner. He was in such a state of delighted excitement that I really thought he would allow me to capture him, but just as my hand was about to close upon him he bolted again, happily in the direction from which he had come. I could do no more than bid him go home, and this is exactly what he did do, for it seems that within a quarter-of-an-hour of my leaving he was busy with his second breakfast and was promptly secured.

No doubt, in both these instances, hunger helped to arouse the homing instinct, but surely such incidents are a conclusive refutation of the absurd contention that there can be any cruelty in keeping in a state of captivity *suitable* species of birds under *suitable* conditions. They also suggest the interesting enquiry whether, in favourable surroundings, selected species of small birds might not, with patience, be trained to "home" in the same way that pigeons do. Perhaps the greatest difficulty would be the probability of "mobbing" by sparrows and others of the "lower orders" of feathered creation. Cats also would, doubtless, take heavy toll, but certainly a secluded garden in which Budgerigars, Canaries, and the like were at full liberty would be a delightful resort.

The mention of Sparrows reminds me of an amusing episode which took place in the same aviary. One day I found a cock Sparrow flying about in the adjoining sitting-room. He had blundered in through the open window and had not sufficient sense to find his way out again. I closed the window, caught the intruder without much difficulty and placed him in the aviary in order to see how he would behave in polite society.

Now, I am aware that Sparrows have apologists—I believe they even have admirers! I belong to neither category—but this is not the place to revive the old, old controversy, which has so often raged around the persons of these feathered anarchists.

For about a week after his introduction, this particular specimen devoted all his energies to gorging himself on the unaccustomed stores of Canary seed, millet, and so forth. When this began to pall through continued repletion, another trait in his disposition emerged—he started persecuting all the small inhabitants

of the aviary. Observe, he never at any time offered to molest a bird of his own size or fighting weight, but the poor little nuns, Spice Birds, etc. had a shocking time. No mercy was shown to the helpless victims, and what was formerly almost an abode of love was fast becoming something like a bear garden, until it seemed probable that my experiment might end in a verdict of "wilful murder," followed by the well-deserved execution of the culprit. However, just in the nick of time, a lusty Java Sparrow seemed to grasp the situation, swore himself in as a special constable, and took his British namesake in hand. From that moment the oppressor knew no peace. He was driven from the food hoppers, chased into corners, chivied about from morn to dewy eve, and every day made frequent and painful acquaintances with the powerful beak of the avenger. He was speedily reduced to such an abject condition that he fairly screamed with terror whenever the representative of law and order came within measurable distance, and each morning the floor of the aviary was more or less littered with the unlovely plumage of *Passer domesticus*. The "treatment" was drastic but effectual, and, after a few days of it, I thought the patient had had almost enough, so I caught him and let him go—half naked, half starving, battered, bruised and bleeding, a much sadder and, let us hope, a wiser bird.

So passed the glutton, bully and coward from the scene of his misdeeds, leaving his character writ large behind him, and the little republic reverted to its normal condition of peace and tranquility.

My second aviary was built against a brick wall facing south and consisted of "night-nursery, day-nursery and playground." It need not be described in detail, there being no unusual feature about it. It was here that a delightful friendship sprang up between two birds of widely divergent species—an incident which supplies one of those "touches of nature" which make the whole world—avian as well as human—akin.

A little Spice Bird—the survivor of a pair—had got into ill-health and seemed to be in a condition of perpetual moult—altogether a miserable-looking object. There was also in the aviary an odd cock Budgerigar who, having no mate to claim his affections, decided to bestow them upon the little invalid. They became in-

separable companions, and it was diverting in the extreme to watch the officious attentions of the self-appointed guardian, his extravagant endearments (in approved love-bird fashion), his attempts to feed his protégé (which the latter seemed scarcely to understand) and his jealous scoldings, dealt out indiscriminately to any inquisitive watchers who came too near. But the prettiest of these "moving pictures" was reserved until evening. There was a long perch which ended in a sunny corner, formed by the junction of the roof with two sides of the aviary. This corner was much in request as a dormitory, but Budgy would allow none but his favourite to occupy it. He would gently push his companion along the perch, with much chattering (as is the manner of his kind) until the desired spot had been reached, he would then raise his nearest wing and spread it out until it completely covered the half-clad little sufferer, and so they would sleep night after night. Truly a charming idyll of bird-life at its best and sweetest!

It was in this aviary that a cock Canary (adult when purchased) lived happily for twelve years and died of sheer old age.

My present aviary is much on the lines of the preceding one, and has so far yielded nothing worthy of record, except perhaps the circumstance of a Yellow Budgerigar hen mating with a Green cock, the young (two only) showing no traces of variation, being absolutely true to the type. A clear yellow Norwich hen Canary also mated with a dark variegated cock; the sole young bird reared being a replica of his father. These results are what might be expected, the influence of the type being stronger in the first generation at least than that of the variety. (I take it that the heavily-marked dark Canary is nearer to the original wild progenitor than the clear yellow, obviously artificial variety.)

In concluding these disjointed memoranda, I wish to ask some member or members of the Society to kindly publish a list or lists of the proved *hardiest* seed-eating birds (non-British), such as can be relied on to thrive in a sheltered outdoor aviary without artificial heat. I should place in the first rank for hardiness the following:—Budgerigars, Madagascar Love Birds, Canaries, Saffron Finches, Java Sparrows (both Grey and White) and Weavers (Red-billed and Russ's). Fairly hardy:—Passerine (Blue-winged), Parra-

keets, Cutthroats, Nuns, Spice Birds, Green Avadavats and Diamond Sparrows.

These two lists about exhaust my own experience, and I wish to draw upon the experience of others. Information of this kind can hardly fail to be generally useful and may prevent the sacrifice of little lives in experimenting.

[Perhaps some members will kindly respond to Mr. Lockyer's suggestion with regard to a list of hardy seed-eaters.—ED.]

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## RANDOM NOTES ON CRESTED TITS AND OTHER WILD BIRDS.

By SIR ROLAND CORBET.

It may interest our members to have some short notes on a few species which have come under my notice in Scotland and elsewhere.

I might commence with the Crested Tit (*Parus cristatus*) which I was able to observe in the Spey Valley, when I took down a few details as to their nesting and breeding. These birds only build in tree stumps that are quite rotten and very easy to peck a hole in. Consequently these attractive little Tits can only find suitable nesting places in a few spots where old natural fir-woods are to be found. All down the Spey Valley woods of this kind are numerous, and thus it is that these birds especially collect there for their nesting.

They seem to be slightly on the increase, which is surprising, as many eggs and nests are taken every year by so-called 'naturalists.' In Morris's "British Birds" it states that two were killed near the River Spey. The year I was along that valley, in all probability quite twenty pairs were breeding on the hill side where I found two nests, for I myself saw four pairs, and in these dense woods they would very easily pass unnoticed.

In my notes I recorded as follows:—"A nest consisted of a foundation of moss, lined profusely with rabbit's fur, no other material being used, and was placed in the rotten stump of an old fir tree about three feet from the ground; the hole having been bored by the birds themselves by pecking away the decayed wood.



CRESTED TIT  
(*Parus cristatus*).



Within were three eggs, which was not the full complement, the normal clutch being at least five or six. The eggs were white with reddish spots chiefly on the larger end, similar to a Blue Tit's, but slightly bigger.

The food of the Crested Tit consists, as in the case of other members of the family, of insects; but they also consume a lot of seeds from the fir-cones, as well as berries, such as rowan, etc. This species is resident, but its numbers are sometimes augmented by migrants from the Continent. Its note is very similar to the Cole Tit, but has a peculiar quaver at the end.

I might add that another nest I found belonging to this species was of especial interest, for it was placed in a hole formed by a board being nailed against a hollow in a fir-tree trunk, the tree itself being alive and not decayed as is usual, the birds having taken advantage of a small entrance between the board and the living trunk. The board had been placed there by a Ghillie who took a great interest in wild birds, and he told me that although he had found a great many nests of Crested Tits, he had never before seen one in anything approaching to an artificial site, or in hard wood, as in the above case. He had seen a pair of these charming little birds in his garden, and thinking they had been unable to discover a suitable nesting site, had devised one for them, for which they appeared grateful, much to the delight of the landlord, who took the greatest interest in his feathered tenants, for they were by no means the only ones, as in addition to other birds, a pair of Tree-creepers had utilized another tree treated in the same manner.

I was also fortunate enough to find a Crossbill's nest (*Loxia curvirostra*) which was built near the top of a tall Scotch fir on the outskirts of a wood, being placed towards the end of a horizontal branch.

The nest closely resembled that of a hedge-accentor's, but somewhat larger. There were young birds within, nearly fully fledged; one of whose number was unfortunate enough to be blown out during a gale, which I picked up dead. Its mouth was full of seeds of larch cones. Up to the age of three weeks, the bills of the nestlings are quite straight.

Coming to an entirely different family and locality, I may

perhaps be permitted to record a few of my observations on Tawny and Barn Owls in Shropshire.

On the 26th of July, 1912, my note book has the following:— I had to-day an opportunity of making some interesting observations on these two species. About 7.15 p.m. I saw two Tawny Owls emerge from an old elm tree; it being nearly an hour to sunset I could see with ease. The two birds started beating the ground for mice, etc. To prove that in the first instance the birds had not been disturbed, one of them very soon caught a mouse and flew into a tree to eat it.

This hardly seems to tally with Mr. Bonhote's remarks in his "Birds of Great Britain," where he says:—"This species . . . is extremely nocturnal, never appearing until quite dark, and seldom pursuing its prey in the open, but keeping to glades and rides in the woods." In this case it was perfectly light and the birds were quartering over an open grass field. All this time I could hear a curious high-pitched sort of squeal proceeding from several of the neighbouring trees, and on crawling up to one on all fours, discovered a young Tawny Owl and was able to watch him making this noise for some minutes, besides which he uttered the well-known "kee-wick" note. On moving forward I disturbed from a tree another Tawny Owl which had a mouse in its claws, and with which it flew away, the mouse dangling beneath it. Neither were the Tawny Owls the only ones of their species that were about, for immediately afterwards I heard a curious snoring noise proceeding from another tree near by, from which, when I approached it, a Barn Owl flew away. It was evident that there was a brood of young ones in a nesting-hole, and I found several pellets cast up by the owls lying beneath the tree, which I examined. These pellets were composed exclusively of the undigested portions of mice and voles, showing that this species of owl—a fact which gamekeepers and others do not always realize—is one of the most useful to farmers and agriculturists.

I might mention that in the same tree, within a few feet of the owl's nest, was a stock dove incubating her two eggs, and yet people say that these owls kill pigeons.

The Barn Owl is a very expert mouser, and the way in which it can sense a mouse and drop right on it in long grass, is amazing.

I have observed that they usually fly about six feet from the ground, then suddenly checking themselves, they hover for a moment before dropping like a stone into the grass, where they remain for a second or two before rising on the wing with a mouse in their talons. I disturbed a Barl Owl from a tree when in the act of eating a mouse, and on flying away the bird had the mouse in its bill, but as it flew it very distinctly transferred it to one foot, which goes to prove that that is the ordinary manner of carrying its prey.

[We are very pleased, not only to have a fresh writer for our Magazine, but also one who gives such interesting matter as does Sir Roland Corbet, who is evidently a keen observer of birds, and we express a hope that he will continue to contribute in other numbers. If a subaltern in the Coldstream Guards can do this, there are surely several other members of the Avicultural Society with more experience, because they are of riper years, who could do likewise.—EDITOR.]

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## REVIEW.

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### “THE BIRDS OF SOUTH AMERICA.” \*

The first Vol. of what will apparently end in being a very important work, is published, and consists of an index, enlisting the number of species of birds at 4561. This list, however, is by no means regarded as final, but the authors venture to hope that it will form a basis on which ornithologists can pursue their investigations.

The scope of the list includes South America and the islands adjacent to the coast from Columbia, Venezuela, Tobago, and Trinidad to Cape Horn and the Falkland Islands. It will naturally be a costly work, the first Vol. being £1. 1s. and the rest £3. 3s. each, with a very large number of coloured plates.

Lord Brabourne is a young and enthusiastic ornithologist, who we hope will have many years of active work and research

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\* “*The Birds of South America.*” by LORD BRABOURNE, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. and CHARLES CHUBB, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., Zoological Department, British Museum. Vol. I.

London: R. H. PORTER, 7, Princes Street, Cavendish Square, W.  
 JOHN WHELDON & Co., 38, Great Queen Street, W.C.  
 TAYLOR & FRANCIS, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

before him, and whilst he is able to observe birds in their native wilds in some parts of S. America, Mr. Chubb is ably assisting him from within the walls of the Natural History Museum [South Kensington].

It is no light affair to tackle, and such an effort deserves to be crowned with success.

To aviculturists who have access to the work, a great boon is the fact that English names are given to the birds as well as those in Latin, many of the former filling bird-lovers with an extra desire to obtain some of them as living pets. Amongst the Humming-birds the little family *Phæthornis*, for example, is called "Hermit," of which thirty-nine species are indexed.

Then there are the Sabre-wings, the Emeralds—[picture the Blue-breasted Emerald! and the Blue-spotted, and the White-breasted and the Green-headed]—*Agyrtia* is the family name. And does not a bird which is called the Blue-headed Sapphironia appeal to you? Go and look some of them out in the Museum cabinets—Mr. Chubb will no doubt show them to you. But you must ask him for *Lepidopyga cæruleogularis*, then he'll understand you! even if you don't quite do so yourself.

Oh! what treasures and flashing bejewelled feathers there must be. "Families" who call themselves *Erythronotes*, some of which belong to Felicia and Alice, whilst others are blue-capped, or copper-tailed, or green-bellied, or white-breasted, and this family calls itself *Saucerottea*. Dear me! one pictures them with *something* saucy about them: tails probably! And fancy walking into a nice clean bird-shop, and seeing eight species of delicious birds, all called "Sapphire," and taking home with you a Rufous Throated Sapphire, or a White-throated or a Red-rumped Sapphire.

One's behaviour would be *so* boisterous that one would run the risk of being hurried to the nearest lunatic asylum! And there are more of that genus—I only know them as Humming-birds—but with such names, they surely *must* be treasures, as indeed they always are. I read of the Blue-chinned and the Blue-breasted Sapphire; and hardly has one recovered from the agony of desire, when one's eye catches on another family known as the Wood-Nymph (*Thalaurania*).

Imagine writing to the Editor of the *Avicultural Magazine* :

“ Sir, I have lately acquired a humming-bird new to aviculture, viz., *Thalurania refulgens*—the Refulgent Wood-Nymph.” It is the sort of thing one might see in an up-to-date Drury Lane Pantomime.

I feel that if I look through Lord Brabourne’s and Mr. Chubb’s index much more, that I shall either take the first aeroplane to Brazil, Ecuador and British Guiana, or expire from futile and fatal longings.

I have, for I cannot resist it, turned over another page (p. 123) and the first name that catches my eye is “ Little Violet-ear,” and feel certain that this is no dry museum index of ornithological research, but a fairy story, which after all would not be astonishing, for Lord Brabourne’s grandfather wrote very charming fairy stories.

Yet not for the world would I encourage the capture of these living jewels, at least not until we are quite *quite* certain we can feed them and keep them well and happy.

But there are hundreds of other species which *could* be imported. Barbets, galore. Five-coloured; gold-fronted; orange-banded; Many-coloured, etc.; some from Peru, some from Ecuador, some from Venezuela, Brazil, etc. And the Woodpeckers! One hundred and ten species under ten family titles. Golden green; black and green; Blood-coloured; Beautiful; Crimson-banded; and so on. I think the Piculets must be rather attractive too; [*Picumnus*] *such* a lot of them! There are *ever* so many Bush-Shrikes and Bush-Birds and Ant-Birds and Ant-Wrens and Ant-Creepers and Ant-Thrushes. It bewilders one, and one feels inclined to exclaim “ My giddy Aunt.” “ The pale Earth-creeper ” sounds rather too much like a worm, as does also the red-tailed ditto, but for all that they are apparently birds, and no worms. And imagine winning a special prize at the Horticultural Hall for the rarest bird in the show, and having to catalogue it as an “ Equatorial Whiskered Recurved-bill.” “ Tyrants ” there are too, any amount. I should’nt care for them, we already have one or two too many at *home!* and *they* ought to be ‘ in captivity ! ’

Flycatchers, too, of sorts by the hundred; and Manakins; amongst which are coroneted; fire-crowned; golden-winged; fiery-headed; opal-crowned; azure-crowned; etc.

Of Thrushes, or things alliéd to Thrushes, there are many.

One becomes confused when one finds the Rose-breasted Grosbeak of N. America, which is found in the winter in Columbia and Ecuador, called *Zamelodia ludoviciana*; when one has been forced—*nolens volens*—to speak of *Hydemeles ludovicianus*.

The genus of *Sporophila* (lover of seeds) is represented by forty-two species. Some of these, although very few, have been kept by members of our Society—the Chestnut-breasted, for example, and the ocellated, or is it lineolated? And there are nineteen Siskins, in which list of course is included the now well-known Hooded (or Red) Siskin (*Chrysomitris cucullatus*), which was successfully bred by Dr. Amsler at Eton. But *Spinus* is given as the family name, not *Chrysomitris*. One will forget one's own name next!

Some of our exhibiting members would give much fine gold for the possession of some of the members of the *Dacnis* family. *D. cayana* is well known as the Blue Sugar bird. I don't think I should mind Bang's Scarlet-thighed Honey Creeper (*D. fuliginata*), though probably bang would go saxpence *and* the rest, before one got it.

As to Tanagers, their name is legion; their mere names filling up twenty-seven pages of this voluminous index. Now that collectors of living birds are being drawn into the great South American Continent, we aviculturists may look forward to receiving some of these rarities. We take off our shoes when we strive to gaze into the depths of those vast forests, when we mentally wander on the uplands of those unexplored countries, and see as in a vision the Silver-banded Motmot swinging his pendulum tail, or hear clairaudiently the ringing notes of some unnamed denizen of a mountain gorge. Yet what struggles and trials and privations would have to be undergone before reaching this fairy land.

I have been told, by one who knows, that the uplands of *British* Guiana are a paradise, with air so exhilarating and health-giving that one never would wish to retrace one's steps to that large sponge which is anchored in the Northern seas, called the British Isles. That there, in that Guiana, one enjoys all that is desirable of the tropics and nothing to the contrary, when one can pitch one's camp at a height of 4,000, 5,000 or 6,000 feet, beside limpid torrents.

with birds of brilliant hues about one, mayhap unknown to Museum researchers, treating one in a familiar manner in ignorance of mankind and aviculture. [H. D. A.]

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE.

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As the Editor will be in Italy during April and May, it is particularly requested that all articles, etc. be sent to Mr. SETH-SMITH at the Superintendent's office of the London Zoological Gardens, who has very kindly undertaken to see to anything in Mr. Astley's absence. The Editor, however, hopes to have stocked sufficient 'copy' for the May and June numbers of the Magazine; and *will* have, if members will be good enough to send in more as soon as possible.

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## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

### TAME WILD GEESE.

THE DUCHESS OF BEDFORD writes, apropos of Miss Dorrien-Smith's account of the tameness of Wild Geese [in the *March Mag.* :]—"There is no doubt that wild geese do get very tame when left in peace. We bought seven Brent Geese the other day from a man who had caught them in the nets on the Lincolnshire coast. They were pinioned on arrival, and at the end of a week were feeding on the banks of the pond with some of their own kind which we bought from the same man three or four years ago, I say, 'at the end of a week,' but they joined the others as soon as they were put out, only they were more wary at first, and took to the water."

"A Pink-footed Goose, which had its wing broken on Fair Isle, walked about on the island, comparatively tame, for two or three years."

"The large flocks of Wigeon which come here (Woburn Abbey) in the winter, remain on the grass until one is well within gun shot, then fly round, and settle again."

"The Pochards and Tufted Ducks, which come in hundreds in the winter, are as tame as the pinioned birds."

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Mrs. NOBLE, who is very much interested in her aviary, writes that she has been rather amused with two little incidents. She has a Bleeding-heart Dove that roosts every evening on a perch, and a little Steel Finch sleeps on the back of the Bleeding-heart, nestling down amongst its feathers for warmth.

Another interesting scene is that of a Ribbon Finch (Cutthroat) which nestles under the wing of a Harlequin Dove, its head just peeping out.

A hen Bengalese has mated with a Magpie Mannakin, and Mrs. Noble is much interested to see what the result will be of this hybridism.

[What with Cut-throats and Bleeding Hearts, the inmates of Mrs. Noble's aviary do not sound as peaceful as they evidently are!—ED.]

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#### THE MOULT OF IMMATURE BLACK REDSTARTS.

I have noticed the remarks in Mr. W. E. Teschemaker's letter on moult of the Black Redstart. I notice in this month's issue (March) a statement to the effect that the young after the first autumn moult are darker than the adult female in breeding plumage. Thus it would seem that the young would not be in adult plumage for about fifteen months after hatching. I am not quite certain on this point, as I have never had young of this species in the nest to enable me to note at what time the adult plumage is assumed.

I had a young male sent me towards the end of July a few years ago, sold to me as a hen, but, on examining the plumage, I could see it was a male,

In immature plumage the female is of a rusty ashy grey, showing most of the rust colour on the breast; the short wing-feathers close to the body are very narrowly edged with dingy buff. The male is only very slightly larger, but he is of a uniform smoky grey all over head, neck and back; the breast has less of the rusty colour; the short wing-feathers have broader edges of pale rusty buff on the outer edge than the female; when the wing is closed it clearly indicates where the clear white edges would show in the adult plumage; the two dark-brown centre tail-feathers are a shade broader than those of the female, but the remaining orange-red tail-feathers are no brighter than those of the opposite sex in immature plumage until after the adult feather is attained. This bird was sent to me in July, moulted the following September and came out into rich adult costume as bright and clear as any adult male I have ever seen.

If the Black Redstart does not come into adult colour until the second autumn moult, it is strange why the Common Redstart should not do the same. This bird, however, after leaving the nest, is like a young Robin with an orange-red tail. until Autumn, when it moults into adult plumage; the only difference is that the jet black throat and orange breast is more frosted at the tips of the feather than in spring, and the white forehead not so clear owing to the feather tips being grey like the top of the head.

P. F. M. GALLOWAY.

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#### THE MOULT OF IMMATURE BLACK REDSTARTS.

SIR,—I notice that one of our members has some criticism on my recent short letter on this subject, both from a literary and an ornithological point of view. He protests against the use of the popular name "*Blackstart*" on the ground that it is a "lazy abbreviation, which is not only incorrect but might be misleading."

The test of a popular name is its popularity and this particular name stands the test well, for I doubt if there is anyone in this country, interested in insectivorous birds, who is not acquainted with the name or who would apply it to any other species. It seems to me to be a simple and obvious abbreviation. Just as Nightingale becomes "Gale,"\* so Redstart frequently becomes "'Start" (an abbreviation which I saw in print only a few days since) and "Blackstart" is therefore simply "Black-'Start."

With regard to the other points Mr. Ticehurst raises. He seems to have misunderstood my remarks because I used the phrase "nest-feather" as equivalent to "nestling plumage," but, if he had read the notes I contributed on the nesting of this species, he would have understood my meaning. In these notes I restricted myself chiefly to those points on which I thought the nesting of the species, as observed by me, might throw some light. The plumage of immature Blackstarts *after* the first autumnal moult has been often observed and I therefore did not refer to it (except incidentally), but probably very few aviculturists in this country have seen young Blackstarts in the nest, or reared them from the nest, so I pointed out how much darker young males in nestling plumage (*before* the first autumnal moult) are than adult females and also how much darker than in their first winter plumage. This seemed to me to be interesting and I had not seen the fact noted elsewhere. I called the first winter plumage an "eclipse plumage" because it is duller either than that which precedes or than that which follows, and because it is presumably protective.

And now as to the question whether immature Blackstarts have a spring-moult or not. Ornithologists either label a species as "having a spring-moult" or "not having a spring-moult," but it never seems to occur to them that it may sometimes have such a moult and sometimes not. Yet every aviculturist realises that in the matter of moult not only every species but every individual is a law unto itself. Of the three immature male Blackstarts which I have had under observation during the spring months, two showed some change in March (a few dark feathers appearing on the upper breast) and one of these birds which I had occasion to handle, as will be inferred from the following note, was found to be casting some flights.

11 March, 1910. "Heard Blackstart in No. 2 Div. singing; song rich, bubbling, and in parts like a Starling's."

5 April, 1910. "Transferred Blackstart to No. 4 Div.; has some primaries missing."

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\* The name of the Nightingale is full of charming and poetical associations. "Gale" is certainly a *most* undesirable abbreviation, and whether it be due to laziness or not, it decidedly gives one that impression. Hundreds of people would not know what it was meant to signify. Neither is the abbreviation Blackstart correct, because start = tail, and the Black Redstart has, as its name implies, a red tail. Blackstart = Blacktail. In old English 'start,' 'stert,' or 'steort.'—ED.

I have also a note on the autumnal moult of this particular bird. 10 Sept., 1910. "Cock Blackstart is now in grand colour after moult; rich black on throat and upper breast and some white on wings."

I noticed also in "Canary and Cage-bird Life" that Mr. Allen Silver stated that he knew of a Blackstart now moulting. Here, then, we have evidence that males of this species sometimes have a vernal moult, but I do not say and I do not think that (at all events as far as those individuals which winter in Europe are concerned) this moult is of frequent occurrence. On this point I have obtained some definite evidence from Mr. E. Taylor, who now has the two young males which I bred last summer. He says: "I have now had six young cocks within the last five years, including the two I obtained from you, and have never had one yet that had a spring moult or change of plumage: the two I have at present have not dropped a single feather so far this year though they moulted their body feathers last autumn." I may mention, however, that Mr. Taylor's birds have always been moulted in a cold room in a cold climate, (Glasgow) whereas mine have been moulted in heat, and some heat seems to be necessary to obtain a full and natural moult—of insectivorous species at all events.

With regard to the question of the exact age at which males assume the perfect adult plumage, I note that Mr. Ticehurst says: "Here is an opportunity for aviculturists to decide." It is very satisfactory to find that there is, in his opinion, just one little brick which aviculturists can add to the stately edifice of ornithology, but he has evidently overlooked the fact that this particular brick was turned out rather more than one hundred years since, and by an aviculturist (Bechstein). I can confirm the latter's statement. I obtained the old male (mentioned in my notes) at the end of 1909 in his first winter plumage. In the autumn of 1910 he assumed adult plumage and his colour was good (as may be inferred from my note above) but, after his third autumnal moult, the area of black and the white wing patch were larger and the colour deeper. After his fourth autumnal moult the white wing patch was larger still but the black on the breast was not so deep, which is perhaps due to his having been moulted last autumn in a *cold* bird-room. Our member, Mr. Galloway, tells me that he considers that some Blackstarts attain their full beauty at their second autumnal moult, but I do not think that he has had the opportunity of watching one particular male for three years as I have, and I think he has overlooked the fact that when he saw this male in my bird-room last October he told me he had never seen a larger wing patch.

W. E. TESCHEMAKER.

---

#### BOX-TREES FOR SMALL BIRDS.

SIR,—I should be much obliged if you would kindly inform me whether Box-bushes in an aviary would do any harm to small foreign finches, such as Cordon Bleus, Avadavats, South African Weavers, etc. in an outdoor aviary?

SYBIL MILLER MUNDY.

*The following reply has been sent to Miss Mundy:—*

If you possess Vol. I. of my *Foreign Birds for Cage and Aviary* and look at p. 154 you will see the following:—"A pair of Avadavats built a nest in a box-tree, which I introduced, in a pot, into my bird-room; but no sooner was it finished than a pair of Cordon Bleus took possession, to be in turn ejected by Lavender Finches," &c. I think this will sufficiently prove that box-trees are not injurious to Waxbills, but I have frequently introduced them into other aviaries in which Waxbills or Grassfinches were living and, in spite of the offensive catty smell of these bushes, I consider them quite harmless to bird-life.

A. G. BUTLER.

---

WHITE BLACKBIRD WITH ASTHMA.

SIR,—I have in my possession a pure white Blackbird; the eyes are red and the beak yellow. He has been reared from a nest of five, all white birds. I do not know if the parents were white. I am sorry to say he has a bad asthmatical cough. Could you kindly tell me what is a good thing to give a bird to cure this, I am so anxious he should get well and live. He is very lively and enjoys a bath every day, but he coughs every two or three seconds. I feed him on Abrahams' soft-bill bird food and puppy cake broken up and all kinds of insects.

E. STAVELEY-HILL.

*The following reply has been sent to Mrs. E. Staveley-Hill:—*

Albino birds are always delicate, and thus your bird has readily caught cold. The best remedy is—first a drop or two of castor oil placed well back in the open bill (so that it may be swallowed and not flung away by the bird); then daily in the drinking-water put eight drops of glycerine and a similar quantity of dissolved gum arabic to each wineglassful of water, well stirring the mixture with a glass rod (perhaps a steel knitting-needle would do as well).

When the breathing becomes normal, give a tonic. I prefer iron to anything else,—a crystal or two of sulphate of iron the size of a grey pea dissolved in the drinking-water daily for a week or two, but Syrup of Phosphates is also an excellent thing.

When obtainable a little fresh lettuce chopped up finely and mixed with the food is good. By the way, you should give fruit: all my Blackbirds have grapes and oranges at this time of year and other fruits when in season,

A. G. BUTLER.

---

SIR,—I have a tame Australian Piping Crow, she is a most amusing pet; I have had her three years, she was only a young bird half-grown when I got her. If it would be of any interest to the readers of the *Avicultural Magazine* I will get a good snapshot of her and send it up to you, with a short account of her habits. At present she is busy building a nest in a chair in the conservatory. She is not caged and goes in and out when she likes, following me about the garden whistling and talking.

E. STAVELEY-HILL.

Extract from "British Birds," February, 1913.

A SWALLOW RINGED IN STAFFORDSHIRE AND RECOVERED  
IN NATAL.

The following letter has just reached me:—

Grand Hotel,

Utrecht, Natal,

"Witherby,"

27th December, 1912.

High Holborn, London.

DEAR SIR,

On December 23rd a Swallow was caught in the farmhouse of the farm "Roodeyand," 18 miles from this town, with a metal label round its leg, with the words: Witherby, High Holborn, London, and on the other side B.830.

The farmer, Mr. J. Mayer, took the label off and has it in his possession. As I am interested in birds of any sort and the migration of the same, I shall be glad to know if you receive this letter safely.

Yours truly,

C. H. RUDDOCK, *Proprietor*.

The ring B.830 was put on an adult Swallow by Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, at Rosehill, Cheadle, Staffordshire, on May 6th, 1911. This bird was one of a pair (Mr. Masefield thought the female) which nested in a porch. Its mate was also caught and ringed. At the same time Mr. Masefield ringed another pair nesting in the same porch. In the summer of 1912 he again caught the Swallows which had come to nest in his porch and found that only one of them had a ring, viz. B.827, which was one of the birds nesting there the year before. Neither its mate nor the other pair of which the present B.830 is one had returned to this particular spot.

That this Swallow breeding in the far west of Europe should have reached so far to the south-east of Africa, seems to me extraordinary. Unfortunately the few records we have as yet of ringed Swallows recovered during migration do not afford a clue to the routes taken, and it seems to me unreasonable to suppose that our birds proceed southwards down the east side of Africa as *might* be inferred from this Natal record.

It is, indeed, quite impossible to theorize on a single recovery of this kind and we must be content at present with the bare fact—perhaps the most startling fact that the ringing of birds has as yet produced.

We are most thankful to Mr. Ruddock for reporting this extremely interesting recovery and we hope that the details of it will become widely known in South Africa and thus produce further results. H. F. WITHERBY.

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- Mrs. HOWARD WILLIAMS, 51, Harley House, Regent's Park, London, N.W.

EDITORIAL.

*Correction.*—March No.: In footnote, p. 135, for "Bird Notes," read "Cage Birds."

(Continued from page iii. of cover).

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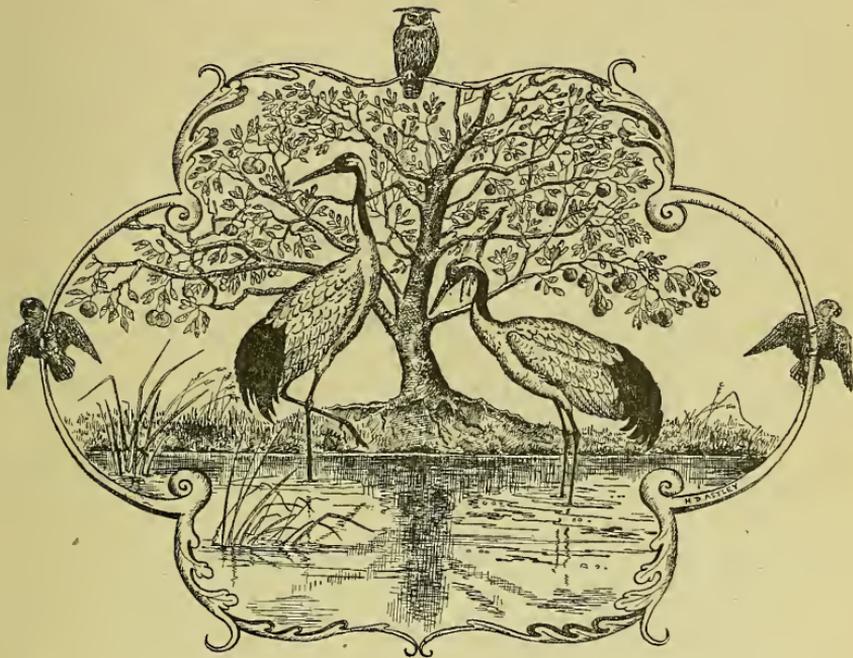
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BLUE NILTAVA.

*Xanthopygia cyanomelœna.*

♂ From a living specimen in the possession of Mr Hubert Astley.

THE

# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

## AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

*Third Series.—Vol. IV.—No 7.—All rights reserved.*

MAY, 1913.

### THE BLUE NILTAVA.

*Xanthopygia cyanomelæna.*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY, M.A., ETC.

When Mr. Goodfellow brought over the Mikado Pheasants from Formosa for Mr. and Mrs. Johnstone in the summer of 1912, he also, amongst a few other interesting birds, imported one Blue Flycatcher which he obtained I believe in China. This bird came into my possession, and was without much doubt the only one in Europe.

I exhibited it in November at the L.C.B.A. Show at the Horticultural Hall, Westminster, and also a pair of Indian Brown-backed 'Robins' (*Thamnobia cambaiensis*) where the Niltava won the silver medal for the rarest foreign bird. To my great dismay, all three of these rare and lovely birds died a little while before Christmas, along with three birds which were newly imported; a rare Tanager (*Pyrranga bidentata*) and two Mexican Ground Thrushes (*Geocichla pinicola*). Whether the latter brought the disease, I know not, but the only birds which died of my hitherto perfectly healthy and acclimatized ones, were the three above mentioned. In the bird-room, where they were kept, there are Himalayan Blue Rock Thrushes, Sunbirds, Sugarbirds, etc., none of which caught the disease, neither did the female *Pyrranga bidentata*.

My bird-room is always kept most scrupulously clean, with open window, washings down with Jeyes' fluid, etc., water vessels thoroughly rinsed twice a day, and the rest of it.

The beautiful little Blue Niltava was the first to succumb;

although he was, before I sent him to the Show, in perfect condition, and if anything a little *too* fat. I noticed him one day in December looking dim about the eye, and when he flew (for he generally came out of his cage to have his bath) he moved feebly compared with his usually swift and robust flight, and on catching him, found his plump breast was dwindling, and that he was going light! after that, he rapidly became worse, and the post-mortem showed death from 'bird-fever.' And then the lovely little Brown-backed 'Robins' followed; first the female then the male. Most despairing! In any case, they would not again have been seen on a show bench, for the little Robins returned with the water upset, the sand all over the food, and both birds exceedingly puffy and the worse for wear! and only from Paddington to Newbury, after crossing London from Westminster.

Well! let me leave this sad part of my account and speak of the Blue Niltava as a pet.

I took him out to Italy for August and September, where he moulted successfully, and enjoyed the warmth, and in addition to that, plenty of fresh insect food, especially black meadow crickets, which are about the size of an English house cricket but more thickly built. They are easy enough to catch, for they live in colonies on grassy slopes, two or three in a burrow of their own making, and these burrows are very apparent, holes which a sixpence would about cover over. One takes a long piece of stiff grass, twiddles it into the burrow, and after a moment or two, out runs a grillo (cricket) which is at once seized and put into a bottle. One can catch thirty or forty in a very short time. These are the crickets which in Italy, (and I fancy it is much the same kind of insect in Japan) are kept in tiny cages on account of their so-called song. They are very pugilistic, and if one sits still, one sees two issue from different burrows and spar at each other like game-cocks.

The Blue Niltava appreciated them highly; they went down, after a certain amount of banging about, like oysters. He always had a flight in a room, and loved his bath, which he would take two or three times a day. He would settle on the back of a chair, flirting his tail from one side to the other, and uttering a sharp "Tck," besides which he had an extremely pretty song; at moments

rather like an English Robin's, at others more resembling some bird of the gorse lands, such as a Stone-chat, etc.

From my fingers he readily took mealworms, although he was very shy at times ; but he was, just before his death, becoming much tamer.

In the wild state, this beautiful Niltava is found in China and Japan. It passes on migration through the Lower Yangtse Basin, where it arrives at the end of April. It is met with in numbers among the bamboos of the Lushan hills, and returns in September.

Mr. F. W. Styan records that it breeds at Ichang in West China, and Mr. Seeböhm, writing on the birds of Tsu-sima, Japan, shot a solitary male on the 22nd April (*Ibis*, 1892), when it was sitting on the branch of a bush, and not at all shy.

M. Kalinowski obtained a female in Corea. It is also seen in the island of Hainan, which lies opposite the extreme southern point of the mainland of China and which is separated from it by a channel only a few miles in breadth.

Mr. Swinhoe, when he wrote on the "Ornithology of Hongkong," mentioned that this bird's native name is, in Cantonese, "Moey-Fa-tsoey"; and that a few occur in Hongkong in April. In Canton for the first fortnight in April he observed them as remarkably abundant near the city walls. "Almost every mound," he wrote, "or gravestone, had its blue bird standing erect, on the look-out for passing insects. I was much struck with the appearance of a brown bird of similar habits and seen in similar positions; this I found to be the female of the Blue bird; the one I shot being an almost uniform olive brown plumage."

It is just that, the charming contrast so often to be found between males and females of different species, each one setting off the beauty of the other. One of the most striking examples is perhaps to be seen in the two sexes of the Purple Yellow-legged Sugar Bird, where the male is like a sapphire, and the female a green tourmaline.

The description of the female of the Blue and White Niltava is as follows :—Bill, blackish brown ; legs, greyish brown ; iris, dark brown ; inside of mouth, yellowish flesh colour ; upper parts, olive

brown : rump redder ; tail fringed with reddish brown ; wings, brown margined with reddish olive ; throat, buff ; breast, olive tinted with buff ; belly and vent, white touched with buff.

If anyone has a friend in Canton, perhaps some of these delicious birds could be imported in pairs.

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## ON BIRDS AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS

BETWEEN

### PUERTO VARAS & PUERTO MONTT.

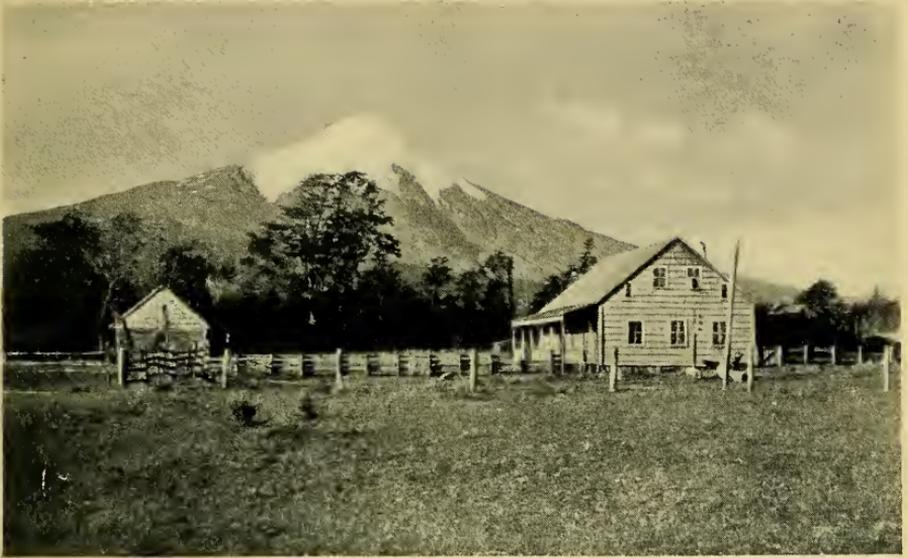
By F. E. BLAAUW, C.M.Z.S.

Puerto Varas is a small place on the Southern shore of the beautiful lake of Llanquihué in Southern Chile. The chief glory of this lake is the snow-clad top of the Osorno volcano which, along with other mountains, can be seen from the greater part of it.

Puerto Varas is on the way to Puerto Montt, if one goes south, and is a fairly important place, mostly inhabited by German colonists. When I was in Puerto Varas I had just returned from a trip to the Nahuel Huapi lake, and had the intention to travel northwards to Valdivia, so that I only stopped for a day at the place named. It was the 25th of March, 1911, and I thought I would spend it by making an excursion to Puerto Montt. Accordingly I set out on horseback early in the morning, travelling southwards. The road at first led through open country, more or less hilly, and was, as is usual for roads in Chile, of the worst kind.

In the neighbourhood of Puerto Varas the Diuca Sparrows, which in Chile take the place of our House-Sparrows, were very numerous ; and the Chimangos, which are the birds of the roads and are as tame as barn-door fowl, were there as usual. Occasionally I saw one or two *Zonotrichia pileata* amongst the Diucas, but these being of a more retiring and shy disposition, would always quickly disappear, leaving the Diucas in evidence.

After about half-an-hour's ride we crossed a stream by a bridge, which was of the usual Chilean design, that is, it consisted of a wooden framework on which a number of loose stout planks, full



ENSENADA, VOLCAN OSORNO.



PUERTO VARAS. QUEBRADA DEL DIABLO.



of holes were laid to form the road. As I passed, a pair of oxen spanned to a large cart full of wood, showing more sense than their driver, flatly refused to pass over the miserable structure. My horse had experience enough to avoid the dangerous places, and we passed over without mishap.

Near the edge of the stream was a small wooden cabin, and a tame Long-billed Parrakeet (*Henicognathus leptorhynchus*), which evidently belonged to the people who lived there, was washing its head in the water of the river. The poor thing had not only its wings but also its tail cut short, so that it looked quite a different little thing from what it ought to look. But in Chile they like to spoil the beauty of anything they can get hold of.

Following the road, I passed some enclosed fields near a farmhouse, and in one of them about forty Black-faced Ibises (*Theristicus melanopsis*) had alighted, and were walking about with the greatest unconcern looking for grubs. Their grey and buff plumage and rosy-red legs made them objects of great beauty.

The road now led through the remains of a primeval forest which had been burnt down, and of which the tree stumps were still standing. Some of them were of enormous size, two or three yards across, and as the interior was rotten and decayed quite a little garden of flowering shrubs like fuchsias, Darwin's barberies, etc. grew on them.

After about two-and-a-half hours ride, we came to the summit of the rising ground, and as I reached the top the sea lay in front of me, whilst in a deep and lovely bay on my right was the town of Puerto Montt. In front, some islands were visible, and in the distant haze there was the contour of Chiloe. It was a lovely sight. The town itself has very little to recommend it. It is like nearly all South American towns, built on the square system. One fairly wide street runs right through it, and in the middle near the sea is an open square or garden, where the "fashionable" people assemble in the evening and, I believe, hear a band play occasionally. The streets are all very dusty when the weather is at all dry, as of course there is no pavement. The "trottoirs" were raised and held by a square wooden beam, on which I noticed horse-shoes fastened in such a way as to form rings, and I afterwards saw that they were

used for tying up the saddle-horses to them whilst their masters went about their business.

After a while, we reached the principal inn of the place, where we ordered some luncheon, and whilst exploring the building I found a small courtyard in which a Gull, a White Egret and a female ashy-headed Goose looked very sad and out of place. The White Heron, which perhaps looked as miserable as any of the trio, had not long ago, the host told me, flown away as he had forgotten to have its wings cut, and after an absence of a few days had voluntarily come back to re-occupy its dismal place near the small water-basin. This story the host told me in great triumph as I remarked to him upon the sad looks of the poor birds.

After luncheon, I enquired about the distance to go to a German settler whom I wanted to visit, and in true Chilian style got the wildest ideas and estimates about the situation of this estate, which I knew to be not very far away. The host told me it would take three or four hours or more; another man estimated the distance at two hours, etc., etc. Not trusting any of them, I went into the town and chanced to find a man who had actually been there, and told me that I could easily reach the place in an hour-and-a-half, and this information proved to be true. So having mounted our horses we left the town in a westerly direction and without much trouble found the road we wanted.

After having gone uphill for a while the road led amongst the ghastly-looking remains of burnt forests. I had been told to follow the road until I passed two lakes, and eventually I reached the first of the two. This would have been a lovely spot from its shape if everything round it had not been burnt down. After a while I passed the second lake, and shortly after this the road entered a beautiful unharmed forest. I had been told to look for a gate, and after a while the gate appeared, and passing through it I entered the forest, which still showed all its original beauty. The road was nothing else than the bed of a stream, which, for some reason or other, had changed its course and was winding through the forest in a most eccentric way. The ground was damp, and many of the old trees were covered with ferns and lichens, some white ones hanging down in fringes and other brownish green ones,

growing in cushions and patches. Fuchsias, with their graceful slender branches full of little scarlet flowers, were particularly abundant, and on many of the old beeches were bushes of a parasitic plant with pale scarlet pipeflowers and pale green square leaves. On an old tree that was partly decaying, were bushes of a kind of bromelia with glorious scarlet centres (*Bromelia bicolor*). Having admired these and all the variety of beautiful plants which this part of Chile offers in abundance, I heard the usual mocking laugh of *Pterotochus rubecula*. The bird that generally laughs at the intruder and disappears. This particular bird however was of an inquisitive disposition, and instead of disappearing it quietly sat in a tangle of dead wood in a very conspicuous place and watched me closely. I stopped to look at it, but it did not mind it in the least. *Pterotochus rubecula* is a pretty brown bird with yellow red breast and eyebrows and intelligent big glittering black eyes. Little light spots on the sides are an additional ornament. In shape, the bird is between a robin and a wren, the tail being carried upwards. It is a little person, that knows what it is about and takes great interest in what happens in its domain. It is about double the size of our own robin.

As I went on, a little brown black Wren, larger than our own bird, and with not quite such an upright tail (*Scytalopus magellanicus*), crossed the road and disappeared in the jungle. After a while the wood became thinner, and at a curve of the road began to give way to bamboo bushes with open spaces between them. Turning to the right the ground rose, and on an eminence clad with grass stood the house and farm-buildings, all low constructions of wood and sheet iron. I opened a gate in a wooden fence, entered an enclosed space and rode to a door that stood ajar. After a while somebody came forward and told me that the owner was absent, but that his wife would soon be there, and asked us to alight. This we did, leaving the horse to take care of itself as is usual in those parts. The lady of the house having come, showed us the farm and grounds in which I noticed the beautiful strong growth of the fruit trees, and she told me that they had reclaimed all the land themselves, it being a virgin forest all over when they took possession of it. When she showed me her poultry yard, I asked if the foxes did not play

great havoc, the virgin forest being so near. Her answer was that they poisoned them, and upon my asking her how this was done, she told me to my horror that they did it by spreading poisoned birds. "We sow poisoned grain every spring, she added, and this kills many thousands of little birds, which we use as bait"! I pictured to myself all those lovely little Chilian birds lying dead in thousands, and in the breeding season too, and it was all I could do to restrain my intense indignation, an expression of which would have been quite useless; but one thing I did say, and that was to warn her that the insect pests would be innumerable if they continued to wantonly destroy the little birds in that manner. But she only laughed, saying that they would get no harvest if they did not poison the little birds. So I daresay that they will go on with it just as in other parts they wantonly burn their forests until the climate changes, and no more rain comes, so that parts that were once overrun by a luxurious vegetation are now arid stone deserts.

Finding me so much interested in birds and in the few nice shrubs near the house, the farmer's wife advised us to return to Puerto Varas by a cross-country road which did not touch Puerto Montt, and which ran a great part of the way through her husband's estate. I gladly availed myself of her advice, and having thanked her for her hospitality, we mounted our horses, which were feeding on the rank grasses near the house, and departed on our journey hoping not to lose our way.

We at first crossed some grass fields, and others from which the harvest had been gathered, after which we came to wilder country, thickly grown with bamboo bushes, and here we came across some nice-looking cattle that seemed mostly to feed on the bamboo.

Very soon after having left the house I had noticed a clump of enormous trees, which from top to bottom were covered with beautiful large white flowers like apple-blossom. My road led me close to this clump of trees, but I could not reach the foot of them as the trunks were standing in an impenetrable tangle of bamboos. They were giant specimens of *Eucryphia pinnatifolia*, or Urmus trees as they call them in those parts; and these trees seem to attain their greatest size in this part of Chile.

Riding on I descended a slope to cross a river and entered a virgin forest, mostly composed of Urmus trees, although there were a good many antarctic beeches and a great variety of other trees and shrubs as is usual in those parts of Chile, which makes those woods so lovely. The trees were full of Long-billed Parrakeets (*Henicognathus leptorhynchus*) which screamed loudly and were very active, flying about in small flocks or perching on the tops of the giant trees. These birds were probably feeding on the seeds of the Urmus trees, which are very numerous, and on the countless other seeds and berries as well (the Urmus fruit looks like a small olive).

Although the bill of the Long-billed Parrakeets looks as if it was made to dig up roots or bulbs, I never saw any of them on the ground, as long as I was in Chile, in places frequented by those birds. My tame birds of this species at home, however, delight in digging up the turf in their aviary and eat the roots of the grass.

The woods also resounded with the calls of the large grey white-backed Woodpecker (*Colaptes pitius*) which at this time of the year goes about in small parties. Riding through woods in Chile I had often heard a curious trembling noise in the thickest parts of the forest, but I had never seen the bird itself, although the noise followed one. This time I was more fortunate, and saw that it originated from a beautiful golden-brown and black-brown little creeper-like bird with white underparts, which apparently lived in the thickest jungle. This bird is *Oxyurus spinicauda*, and is quite a feature in the Chilian forest from the way it has of following the traveller. Although it looks in shape so much like our Tree Creeper (*Certhia familiaris*) it does not usually seem to creep up the stems of the trees like our bird. It is always to be found in the bushes and tangles at the foot of the big trees, and I never saw it against a tree. In Punta Arenas, or better in a forest near it, I saw numbers of them feeding on the fat in the carcase of a lamb which hung in a tree near a goldwasher's hut. On that occasion they were quite tame.

In the damp places near streams the fuchsia bushes were very beautiful, as well as the finely subdivided tall ferns with black stems. In the fuchsias one could usually see a Golden-crowned Humming-bird (*Eustephanus galeritus*), which appeared suddenly, screaming loudly, to hover under the flowers. It very quickly disappeared,

only to reappear as suddenly as it went. A little farther on several trees had bunches of a scarlet flowering parasitic plant with square bluish green leaves. Of these flowers the Humming-birds were also very fond.

Riding on I came to a tangle of European Brambles which had spread there in a dreadful manner, and on them quite a flock of *Turdus magellanicus* were feeding on the berries ; some flew away as I approached, but a good many, coming probably from uninhabited parts, were quite tame and allowed me to pass without disturbing themselves. I also saw feeding on the fruit of those brambles, some *Phytotoma rara*. This same species I saw a couple of weeks earlier also feeding on the brambles near the road between Osorno and Puerto Octay.

In some places the bamboos grew against the trees to a great height, hanging down from the big branches like a creeper. On many of the shrubs along the road, the beautiful *Lapageria rosea*, with its wonderful red bell-like flowers, was quite abundant. That curious little creeper, *Tropæolum speciosum*, is also at home in those woods.

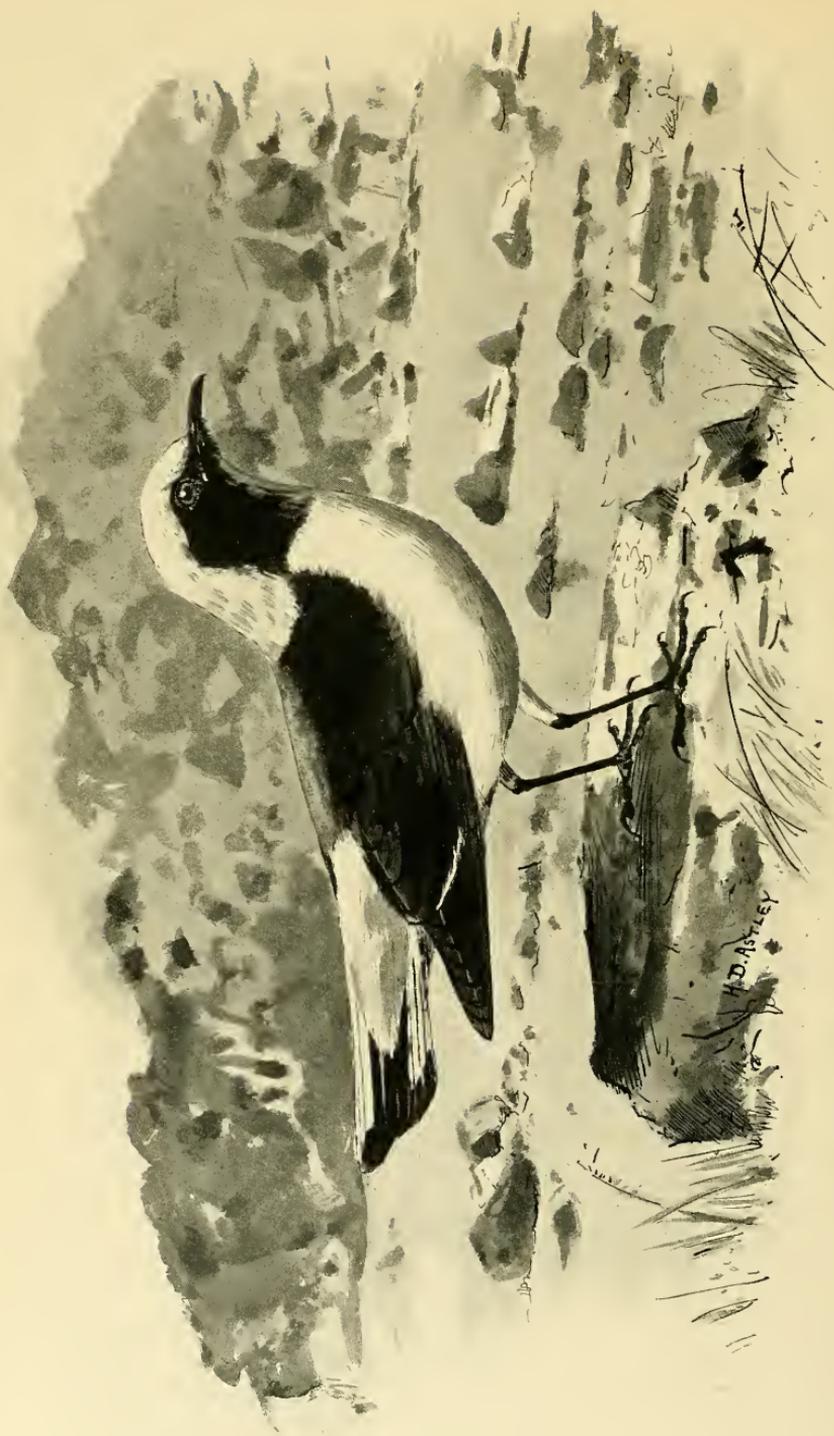
As soon as we neared some settlement the Diucas and the Chimangos were in evidence, and when we passed a house we were generally furiously attacked by a lot of ferocious dogs.

After having left a river, the banks of which we had gone along some time, we turned uphill and passed a cut in the mountain called the "Devil's Glen." In the damp shelter of the Glen the vegetation was most luxurious. All the beautiful evergreens and flowering bushes grew there to perfection ; the fuchsias were enormous, and the different species of ferns most wonderful and splendid also were the tangles of *Gunnera scabra*.

Once having passed the Glen and having gone over the mountains, I came to cultivated country, and soon saw Puerto Varas on the delightful lake of Llanquihué, before me, the snowclad Osorno Volcano and other giants lifting their summits against the clear evening sky.

I had decided to go north again next day, taking the steamer to Puerto Octay, from which place I intended to ride to Osorno. An hour before I left next morning, I noticed near the inn a tame long-billed Parrakeet, which, with stunted wings and tail, was sitting





PIED CHAT  
(*Saricola leucomelana*).

in front of a small house. The little bird was quite tame and was offered me for a few pesos, as soon as the owner saw that I noticed it. Rather foolishly, unmindful of all the miles that separated me from home, I could not resist the temptation, and bought the bird, carrying him to the inn in my hand, and as no such thing as a cage was to be had anywhere, I with great difficulty arranged a little box to put him in. This was just finished when I had to go on board the steamer with all my belongings. In Osorno I managed to get a mate for the little bird, and brought the pair safely home, *via* the Straits of Magellan, Tierra del Fuego, the Smith Channel, etc., etc., where I still have them in splendid plumage at Gooilust, and when their shrill voices ring through the air in the garden where they inhabit an open aviary, it reminds me of the splendid woods and mountains of Southern Chile.

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## THE PIED CHAT

*Saxicola leucomelæna.*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY, M.A., F.Z.S., ETC.

Travellers in Egypt will very probably have caught sight of this strikingly handsome "Wheatear," if that name can be applied to any other of the species besides our own British bird: and the illustration will at once explain the colouring, for with the exception of the under-tail coverts, which are reddish buff, this Chat is black and white, although the primaries and secondaries of the wings are in reality deep brown, but the effect is a black and white bird. The female is the same, but slightly duller in colouring, although one would have expected her to be less conspicuous.

This species occurs in South-Eastern Europe and North-Eastern Africa. It has been met with in Italy and Greece, but as rather an uncommon visitor, I take it.

It is not uncommon in parts of Turkey, in Europe; and very common in New Russia, arriving, like our Wheatear does here, as one of the earliest of the spring migrants. In Palestine it is common, and Canon Tristram recorded it as being found "throughout the year in the rocky regions overhanging the Jordan Valley in the Judæan Wilderness."

It is universally distributed throughout the Sinaitic peninsula, from the highest mountains to the seashore. In Africa it is found in Egypt, Nubia, Arabia and Abyssinia.

Whether any of our members have ever possessed any of the Pied Chats in captivity, I do not know, but in an aviary a pair would be strikingly handsome, and therefore I have given an illustration of it, in the event of anyone, unacquainted with it, being fired with the desire to obtain some living specimens.

All the members of the Chat family—*Saxicola*, etc., are very attractive, both in plumage and demeanour. A hand-reared Wheatear which I once had, was so tame that he would play "hide and seek" with me when out of his cage, popping in under chairs and sofas, sometimes to pop out again behind me when I was searching under the piece of furniture beneath which he had disappeared.

I forget whether I have recorded the sad event, but this charming bird was killed owing to this. I shall never forget the poignancy of my feelings. As I rose up from looking under a sofa, I set my heel right on to the poor little Wheatear, crushing his life out to my intense horror. He had swiftly emerged round the other side of the sofa, when my back was turned towards him, and was evidently, as he had often done on previous occasions, waiting behind me to surprise me and had stationed himself just by one of my feet.

I was about to add that it was a terrible moment, but it was more than that, for it took me a long time to forget it, at its *worst*, and to forget it altogether, I never can, although it occurred some thirteen years ago. I never saw a bird so deliberately play with one for when he bobbed out from behind a chair, he would pirouette up to me with his wings extended, daring me to catch him, and when I made a feint so to do, he would flit off again, appearing round from the other side of the chair to repeat his frolics. It was no question of mealworms or other bird-delicacies, it was nothing but a romp, as one would with a puppy or a kitten.

So that I think, if hand-reared Pied Chats could be obtained; a romping, frolicsome Pied Chat, such as was my "never-to-be-forgotten" Wheatear; some lucky aviculturist would possess a very charming playfellow.

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## THE ENDURANCE OF YOUNG WILD DUCKS,

AND THE PERILS THAT SURROUND THEM.

By INNIS DORRIEN-SMITH.

At the Scilly Isles a very large number of small rocky islands are inhabited only by wild birds, where gorse, bracken, and thrift grows above the high tide confine. The gorse is always more or less in flower, but in the springtime it makes large patches of the most brilliant golden-yellow, forming a wonderful contrast to the pure blues, greens and purples of the sea. Here the linnets twitter merrily and nest.

The sea-pink, or thrift, in May is a wonderful wealth of colour; a rosy pink carpet, especially on the island of Annette, where it covers the whole of the ground up to the big boulders on the verge of the sea, but of this particular island I hope to write another time.

In the autumn, the bracken turns into brilliant yellows, golds and browns, and again the blue sea, and it is *really* blue, forms a most striking contrast. On some of these uninhabited islands a few wild Duck nest where there is no fresh water for their young to be brought up on. But the parent birds carefully think out their whole plan of providing for their young beforehand, and a daring plan it sometimes appears to be.

Last spring, a launch was steaming down the channel between some of these islands, when the boatman suddenly noticed a bird with apparently a long tail, on the water: steaming nearer he discovered it to be a common wild duck with a brood of fourteen young ones following behind as closely as possible. These had evidently come from the island of Samson, which lies about three quarters of a mile across the sea to the westward of Tresco, and the old bird was wisely braving the elements, not to mention the Gulls, to bring her family to the fresh water pools of Tresco: for the shores of which island she and her ducklings were making as quickly as possible.

On landing there they had a steep sand bank to walk up and rough ground with bracken and brambles to get through; altogether a quarter of a mile to cross before the fresh water was reached.

The whole brood apparently arrived safely, as a duck with fourteen young ones was seen there the next day. How many she succeeded in rearing I do not know, but the ravages of gulls, eels, and rats usually reduce the number of young ducks considerably. I have seen an old duck bravely defending her brood from a Lesser Black-backed Gull, standing up and fighting for her family like a true Briton.

Some years the Gulls seem much more voracious than others, and Lesser Black-backs, which certainly are the commonest here, seem the most voracious of their tribe, even attacking and killing Puffins on the outer islands where they all nest together.

I have seen an unfortunate young wild duck bobbing up and down on the water, an eel having caught it by the leg, poor little dear! until it finally disappeared altogether. There are some very large eels in the pool too, one having been caught weighing  $7\frac{1}{4}$  lbs., a broad nosed eel. They appear to flourish in the rather shallow muddy water, and also have not far to go to get out into the ocean to their 100 fathom spawning ground.

Every year the gulls have to pay toll for their ravages, and one or two have to be shot and hung up as a warning to their brothers not to intrude where the young wild ducks are being reared.

There are usually two pairs of Peregrins that breed on the outer rocks, and these also are a great source of danger to all young birds, but their usual fancy is the young white Wyandottes, rather than wild ducklings. An old Peregrin took between 40 to 50 one year, till at last the poultry-man could stand it no longer and the poor Peregrin had to pay for his ravages. The last few years we have had no trouble with these, and they have contented themselves with small birds; sad to say usually Blackbirds, Thrushes, Turnstones and Redshanks; gradually attacking larger birds as their young get older. Puffins and Razorbills being about the last to be attacked by them when the family are nearly full-grown.

I have found nests of the common wild duck on other of the outer islands, from whence they have even farther to travel on the sea, before they are able to reach the fresh water pools with their families.

## FOR LOVE OF BIRDS.

By KATHARINE CURREY.

In a Review in the January number of a little pamphlet "For Love of Beasts," published by the Wild Birds' Protection Society, the pamphlet in question is accused of hindering the advancement of Science by calling attention to many acts of cruelty to animals and birds that go on unchecked, not only in this country. I have read the little brochure, and can only find in it a protest—which every naturalist could not but endorse—against needless or selfish cruelty: but no 'hit' aimed at a legitimate study of animal life.

As an aviculturist, I for one, should be inexpressibly thankful if a law against the wanton and indiscriminate capture and improper caging of birds were put into force; a strict supervision of dealers' shops made compulsory, and bird traffic relegated to those dealers who recognize their duty towards the inferior Creation, and understand the nature and needs of the birds they sell.

The Review further advises that such protests as appear in the pamphlet were best directed against the plumage traffic, and the wholesale slaughter of beautiful birds for the milliners' shops.

Fiendishly barbarous as this slaughter unquestionably is, and for which there is no shadow of excuse (for the plumage of game or poultry would answer their purpose just as well) is the fate of the birds caught alive in millions to furnish the dealers' shops one whit less pitiable? I think, if possible, it is even more so, for whereas the poor birds caught for their plumage are at all events put out of their misery, those destined for sale alive have to linger on in suffering—suffering of the very worst kind that can be imagined, the bird being deprived of every condition of life suitable to its needs in the shops of those dealers who are quite ignorant of the requirements of the birds they sell, and only deal in them for gain. A more flagrant injustice could never be perpetrated on a living creature. No one knows better than the aviculturist that the needs of a bird are fresh air, space to fly, clean water to drink and bathe in, and food and fresh soil suited to its nature.

What then is the lot of birds in such shops? Imprisonment in a cage, too often not large enough for it to turn in, and never cleaned;

a stifling, foetid atmosphere, owing to thousands of filthy cages with many diseased birds in them; gaslight flaring into their eyes for hours when the little head should be tucked under the wing in the restful dark; no fresh water—often *no* water; and, in place of the sweet fresh grass or earth, filth accumulated, on which too often quite the wrong food, sour and tainted, is thrown. Is it possible to imagine greater torture for a creature so exquisitely and delicately organised as a bird? And, alas! this is no fanciful picture, but a stern and hideous reality, in a country that boasts of a high state of civilization! Aviculture is a fascinating pursuit, and enables man and his little bird brother to know and love each other, but as a Wild Birds' Protectionist, I often have heart-searchings not only as to whether aviculture justifies the forcible detention of creatures to whom freedom is a birthright, and for which their whole nature and being are adapted, but in the thought, that by the purchase of even one little bird, I am indirectly contributing to all this suffering by helping to make a market, even though I may have bought it only to set it free!

Then there is another side to the picture. Vast host of birds perish annually during migration, or fall a prey to their natural enemies, of whom they have always to live in fear, and thousands die of starvation during a severe winter. Compare the lot of a bird in a happy home, with its natural surroundings and a kind human friend to care for it, with that of those I have just mentioned. A life of liberty would not seem to be a state of unmixed bliss. The study of birds is a beautiful and interesting pursuit under humane conditions, but are the means employed to arrive at it humane? We know they are *not*, and that the suffering and waste of bird-life is ghastly and appalling. It surely lies with the aviculturist therefore to endeavour to remedy this evil. It is a responsibility we cannot shake off if we would.

The Review I have alluded to deals also with the question of the alleged great inferiority of a birds' mental faculties to those of man, even denying that a bird has memory, and cares only for its food supply, plus of course kind treatment. But if a bird is a creature of such limited understanding, and so extremely uninteresting, what is there in aviculture to learn, as its physical structure is well known?

But who is to place limits to mind? If a bird has mental faculties at all, it has mind. Its senses are far more highly developed than man's: its sensations probably equal in proportion to its place in Creation. Man is unquestionably lord of creation, the whole of the rest of Creation mysteriously linked with him, and the little bird brother one of the most marvellous and beautiful of all created beings. As to the senses of a bird, what human being ever possessed the eye-sight of the Hawk or Eagle, or even of other smaller birds? Or their sense of hearing? Their power to detect wholesome food at a glance, or the presence of a human hand that has been about their nest? Their extraordinary sensitiveness of touch? And as to memory, does not the swallow find its way from distant lands, year after year, back to the old haunts it loves? The pet bird pines and refuses food if deprived of its loved owner, and remembers him, or her, again after a long lapse of time, even years. What is this but memory? Who then shall say that in the miserable prison it is doomed to at the dealers, it does not remember happier days and pine for lost liberty? I do not hesitate to affirm that I am certain it does, and that in that little breast there are longings and regrets of which we grosser mortals reckon little or nothing. I conceive it to be no more than our bounden duty if we cause a bird to be deprived of freedom, to see that it shall find in man not an enemy but a friend and protector.

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## NOTES ON THE MILD WINTER AND THE BIRDS.

By P. F. M. GALLOWAY.

The persistent mild Southerly and S. Westerly winds which have been going on ever since the early part of November (with the exception of about ten days of dry cold weather with the wind Easterly, which occurred about the latter end of last month) has brought on the growth of vegetation at a tremendous pace. We are practically five weeks in advance.

In the woods there are green carpets of bluebells quite five inches high, the foxgloves have grown six inches in length, ferns in places have not died down, some have remained green all the winter.

the Almond is in bloom, only instead of at Easter, the wild Bullace and Blackthorn have been in full bloom for some time past.

Nearly a month ago, I visited an open common in Oxfordshire, and the furze was quite yellow with bloom, and a pair of Stonechats were flitting about on the topmost sprays, the cock bird was wonderfully forward in colour, being as bright as you would find him early in May.

Hawfinches are to be seen about their breeding haunts, quite a number of them, and are in song much earlier than usual.

A gamekeeper told me that he found a Blackbird's nest which contained eggs, this year as early as 20th of February, and the bird had commenced incubating.

Redwings, which usually flock together prior to their departure to the north about the end of March, are now in large flocks, and may be heard already singing together loudly. The Chaffinch, which usually comes into song early in March has been singing freely and in rivalry for close upon three weeks.

Starlings are separating from the flocks and can be seen here and there hanging around their old nesting-places, especially in the morning time; this generally takes place at the end of March instead of the beginning. Green Woodpeckers have already started their rattling or boring noise made by striking the bill in rapid succession against the tree trunk, probably to attract a mate, as this is one of the Green Woodpeckers ways of making love; the other way is, that when the cock bird is near the hen, especially when on the ground in a meadow, he will continually nod his head up and down and make a low-pitched noise, nodding the head up and down much after the fashion of a Drake. The hen appears to take no notice of him, but they evidently understand each other.

These mild open winters are a great help to this species and should cause the Green Woodpecker to become more numerous, for although this bird can stand as much cold as a common House Sparrow, yet if snow and hard frost should last under a fortnight. this species is the first to die of starvation, as it subsists almost entirely on ants in winter and ants and their eggs in summer.

The first of this species to die off are those that are in a neighbourhood where they are compelled to feed upon the small

black and the yellow ant, which they find in the large hillocks in rough grass fields and on open commons ; as soon as the snow covers these to any depth they are done.

Those birds that are able to wriggle on until a thaw sets in, are those that are in a district where the large wood ants nests are to be found in pine woods, they know where these nests abound and will regularly visit them and will bore deep holes into these large heaps of pine needles, the holes often being as large as a rabbit would make, and here they are able to find the ants in winter in a numbed or torpid state and lick them up.

The Lesser and Greater Spotted Woodpeckers appear to get through severe weather better, especially the latter species, as they will feed upon nuts, acorns, and even beechmasts when insect food is scarce and never touch ants, therefore there is a great difference in the way in which the Green and the Spotted Woodpeckers feed their young. If an observer discovers a nest of the Green and is able to keep himself out of sight and yet be close to the nest hole, as I have done, he will see the old birds come to the hole, with nothing showing in their bill at all, go into the nest and remain in the hole for quite a minute and a half, come out and fly off, and will often not return to feed the young for nearly two hours. The reason is this, the ants and their eggs are licked up from the ant's nest and stored in the throat and probably in the bill as well, and are ejected in ball-like masses into the mouths of the young, and these masses of ants brought at a time are evidently large, at any rate, enough to satisfy the young for some considerable time.

The Spotted Woodpeckers, on the other hand, visit the young in the nest-hole every few minutes, and grubs and caterpillars can be seen hanging in the point of the bill of the parent birds.

The male Great Spotted Woodpeckers have already begun their Spring quarrels. In fact, nearly everything is earlier this year except the Cuckoo, and although it has been reported as having been heard, it is not likely to be here any earlier this year than any other, and we shall have to wait until between the 12th and 17th of April before we hear the notes from a real live Cuckoo.

*March 4th, 1913.*

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## HINTS ABOUT AVIARIES.

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At this time of the year, when many species are contemplating nesting arrangements, it is advisable to have a spring cleaning. Where space allows, if there are no living bushes, branches of Scotch fir, when obtainable, last a long time, and can be propped up in corners. Fresh bare branches can also be put in for perching on, and these always look better than straight perches from the carpenter's or cage-maker's shop. Willow is good, and sycamore. Branches that seem quite insignificant when cut from a tree, assume tree-like proportions when fixed in an aviary.

If any portion of the latter is turfed, it is a good thing to remove the old turf, level the ground, sprinkle fine sand, and relay it with fresh turves. Where there are Thrushes, a nice quantity of earthworms can be thrown on to the earth, and covered up with the turf, so that they will not all be devoured at once, but work their way up in a natural manner; giving the birds something to do, and probably affording them some sport in catching them.

All nesting-boxes for Parrakeets, Grassfinches, etc. should be well scoured.

For Parrakeets, there is nothing to beat natural hollow logs, with plenty of dry rotten wood inside, but all aviaries are not large enough to contain them, and everyone has not the opportunity of obtaining them. Lacking these, the best nesting-boxes are those which are sold by the Selborne Society, etc. The boxes must be rounded off in a cup shape within, so that the eggs cannot roll away from beneath the sitting bird, and in the case of Parrakeets, a handful of dry decayed wood can be put in. They prefer the entrance hole to be as small as possible, but the box must not be too deep, or the young might be unable to climb out when they are ready to fly.

Where natural hollow logs can be obtained, they are best placed horizontally on cross bars under an overhanging eave. Many birds will be reminded of their parental duties and privileges by the introduction of suitable nesting sites and materials.

Open baskets may be hung up, where the rain cannot reach, filled with hay, moss, dead leaves, bents of coarse grass, and feathers, etc. Many birds seem to like dry bamboo leaves, amongst

other materials; and for doves and pigeons, the finer twigs of spruce, etc., as well as heather bents are acceptable.

Only one pair of certain species of birds should be kept in an aviary, for instance those of the Thrush family. Doves also are very pugnacious, disturbing each other dreadfully, if several breeding pairs are kept together.

I believe that *quite* small aviaries with, for example, one pair of Blue Birds, or Orange-headed Ground Thrushes, or Shamahs, etc., etc. are preferable, giving much more chance of success in breeding than where there are a lot of birds of various species mixed together, unless an aviary be very spacious, with plenty of nesting places for all.

Parrot Finches are better alone, but several pairs can be kept together, so long as they are in pairs, and the same thing applies to the Australian Grassfinches; except perhaps in the case of the Crimson Finch, which can make itself extremely disagreeable, militantly breaking its neighbours' windows, destroying their homes, and generally interfering with other people's affairs!! But Crimson Finches are not the *only* two-legged creatures that behave in this vulgar and blatant manner!

Tutto il mondo è paese, as the Italians say, which, being interpreted, is "All the world is one country"; the naughty tempers and bad habits to be found in ourselves, are also innate within our aviaries! Only we humans are worse, for at any rate birds are total abstainers, with a few exceptions, and then they only break through their rule through human influence, as once happened when Bishop Wilberforce—the famous Bishop of Oxford as was—tempted a Blue-fronted Amazon to sip port wine [I remember the incident vividly when quite a small boy] with the consequence that the Parrot ended by reeling about the dinner table, much to everyone's amusement, not excluding the Bishop's. Whether it was the result of the port wine, I know not, but not very long after, that Parrot laid an egg!

It is advisable to place the food in a tray-like open box, with sides about three or four inches high, so that seeds, etc. are not littered about. I have these trays lined with zinc, so that they can be scalded out at times.

Flowering grasses, chickweed, etc., are best placed in the form of a miniature sheaf of corn, the stems tied round with a piece of wire, or else the whole bunch can be wired round a stick driven into the ground. In this way, the birds can pull and peck at the green food as if it were fixed by natural roots, and at the same time it is not littered about. It is most important to give fresh green stuff every day during the spring, summer, and early autumn.

In the autumn too, there are elder and hawthorn berries, etc. Thrushes and other birds are very fond of the fruit of the *Physalis*, or Cape Gooseberry, which must be removed from the outer sheath. [Bye-the-bye! it makes good jam for ourselves!

Grit is another necessity. Such little fellows as Melba Finches, Violet-eared Waxbills and the like, greedily devour oyster-shell grit: a small quantity of which, according to the number of the birds, can be placed in a red earthenware saucer. Talking of that, *glazed* red or green earthenware is best; it can be kept cleaner.

Where pheasants, partridges and quails are kept, fresh lettuce and other green food is most important, and here again the lettuces can be tied to a stick fixed in the ground. These birds need fresh salad, berries, fruit, etc. just as much as geese need grass, and ducks and swans, water plants.

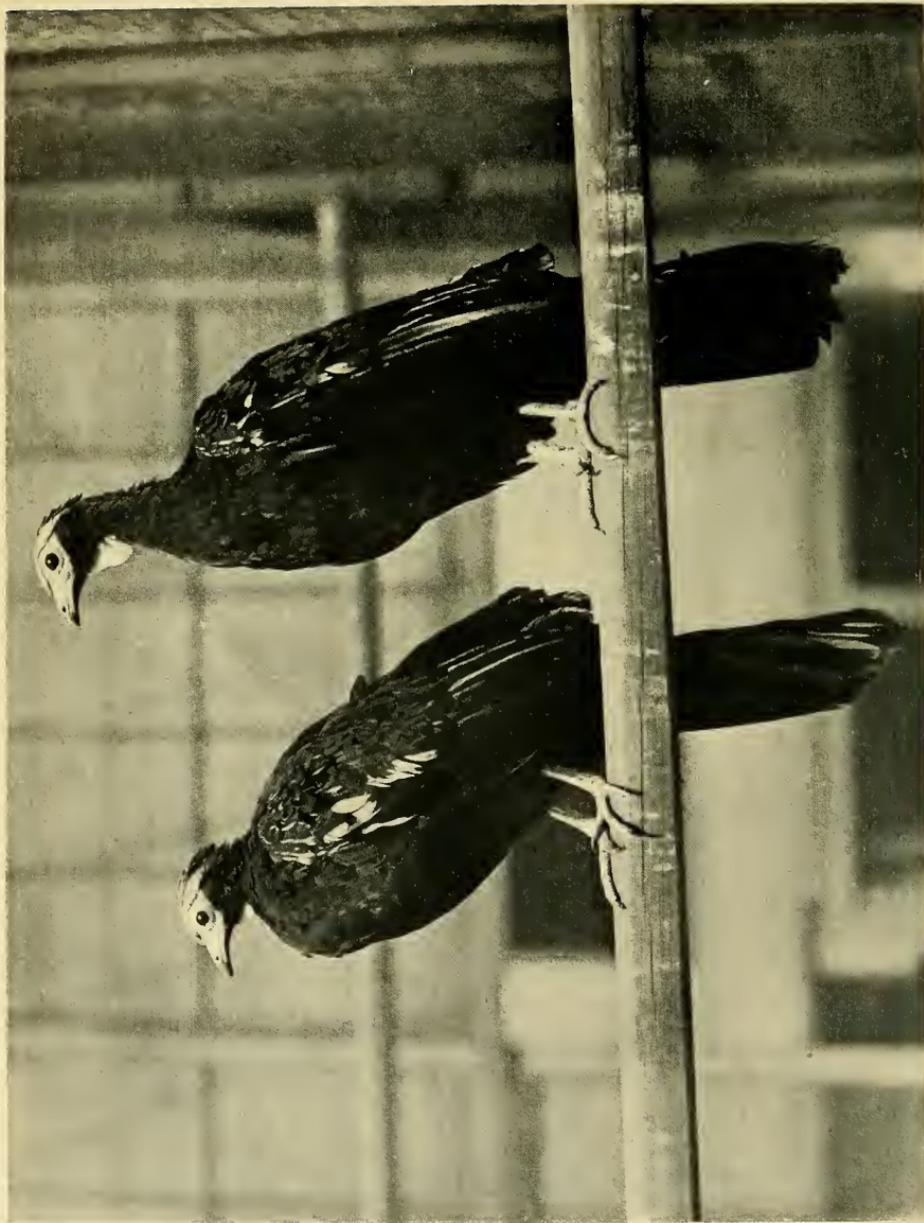
If gentles are given to insectivorous birds, *great* care must be taken that they are clean. A good way of collecting these nasty squirmy things, is to fix up a small rainproof shelter, so long as you can fix it far enough away from your nose, hook up a bucket or tin, with holes bored in the bottom, and a piece of meat suspended inside, and then place a box with clean sawdust beneath. The maggots when ready to leave the nest, will drop through the holes into the saw dust, from which they can be collected; but if they show any dark stain in their little insides, don't give them to your birds, or they will have something in *their's*, which may cause them to turn up their toes.

H. D. A.

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PAIR OF PIPING GUANS (*Pipile cumanensis*) AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Photo by D. Seth-Smith.

## BIRD NOTES FROM THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Some additions have recently been made to the fine collection of pheasants at the Gardens. The Marquess of Tavistock presented a pair of Horsfield's Purple Kaleege Pheasants and a pair of Anderson's Kaleege was purchased, while Mr. W. O. Dankwerts, K.C. has presented a pair of Cabot's Tragopans, and Mrs. Johnstone has deposited two cock Mikado Pheasants.

A pair of Piping Guans (*Pipile cumanensis*) from Trinidad, presented by Mr. L. Leslie Moore, form a very interesting addition to the collection, as they belong to a species which has not been represented for a number of years. It is a very handsome species, black in colour with a greenish gloss, with white on the top of the head and wing-coverts; a naked patch round the eyes, of greenish blue, and a large blue wattle. Like most of the Guans, they are quite tame, and we hope there may be a chance of their breeding.

Twenty-four hybrid Jungle-fowl have been hatched, the male parent being the fine green Javan Jungle-fowl (*Gallus varius*), and the female, the Bankiva or Red Jungle-fowl.

Some months ago five young Cassowaries were deposited by the Hon. Walter Rothschild, and now that they are developing the characteristic colouring on their heads two have been identified as *Casuarius keysseri*, a species only very recently described by Mr. Rothschild from German New Guinea.

A fine specimen of the Greenland Falcon, captured on board ship in mid-Atlantic, has been presented to the Society by Lt.-Col. Drage, R.H.G. and the Hon. John H. Ward, C.V.O.

A very interesting collection of Indian birds has been presented by Major Perreau, amongst which may be specially mentioned a Rufous-headed Crow Tit (*Scæorhynchus ruficeps*), a female Great Niltava (*Niltava grandis*), two short-billed Minivets (*Pericrocotus brevirostris*), four Rufous-necked Laughing-thrushes (*Dryonastes ruficollis*) one Grey-sided Laughing-thrush (*D. cærulatus*), two white-tailed Blue Robins (*Notodela leucura*) and an Ashy-headed Scimiter Babbler (*Pomatorhinus schisticeps*).

D. S-S.

## REVIEWS.

## "WILD LIFE." \*

An illustrated monthly magazine which is the outcome of the exhibition of work by members of the Zoological Photographic Club, which was held at the offices of the Zoological Society of London last summer.

To those who can afford this work, it will be an interesting and valuable addition to any collection of publications on Natural History. It is evident that a great stride has been made in photography of wild creatures in their native haunts and surroundings, and it is also evident that the photographs are taken in that way. There is no faking and no stuffing. The mammals, birds, fish, and insects are alive, whilst many of the reproductions of their life are extremely artistic pictures.

The magazine was first published in January of this year, in which number may be perhaps especially admired the photographs of the Little Egret in their nesting haunts in the south of Spain, by Mr. Wm. Farren; the different poses of the British Wild Cat, by Mr. Douglas English, who is the Editor; the Ring Ouzel with its nest and young ones, by Mr. Alfred Taylor.

In the letterpress too, one finds much that is interesting, and much that is original; indeed all is written by the various photographers, who describe what they saw when taking their pictures.

The February number of "Wild Life" is perhaps even more interesting than the pioneer of the work, beginning with a very striking photograph, as a frontispiece, of one of the few apes now left on the Rock of Gibraltar, its form profiled against the pale mistiness of the sea, below the rock on which it is seated, apparently admiring the view! Mrs. Moore is the successful photographer of this pathetically solitary and human-like figure.

Mr. A. M. Stewart's photos. of the Fulmar Petrel in Westray—an island of the Orkney group—are a triumph of the camera, especially perhaps the one that shows the nesting ledges of Guille-

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\* *Wild Life*, an illustrated monthly.

Edited by DOUGLAS ENGLISH, Dudley House, Southampton Street,  
London, W.C. Art Editor: JOSEPH SIMPSON.

mots, Kittewakes and Fulmars on the face of a precipitous rock, looking almost as if one of the birds themselves, taking the camera, had flown out over the sea, made the exposure, and returned it safely into the owner's hands!

There are successful photos. of Herons and their nests, by Mr. Alfred Taylor, and a splendid one of a fox; "Madra Ruad," (the Red Dog) as he is styled in Ould Ireland, by Mr. Douglas English.

We are more concerned with the birds, as aviculturists, but nevertheless no one who loves wild life, can fail to be interested in the photographs of fish, *taken under water* in their native ponds and streams.

For adults who know their subjects, this publication cannot but be interesting, for the rising generation it will be a means of education, an encouragement to arm themselves with the camera rather than the gun, to study wild life, sooner than destroy it!

H. D. A.

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"OUR VANISHING WILD LIFE." \*

A book which all book-lovers should read, albeit pathetic, sad, and one might say heart-rending.

It is described as a practical treatise on the extermination and preservation of wild life, a protest against slaughter, a call to arms in defence of wild life, which will be heartily welcomed by the friends of the wild birds and mammals throughout the world.

Dealing very largely with facts about the destruction of wild creatures in North America; for Mr. Hornaday is an American and the Director of the New York Zoological Park; it nevertheless is world-wide in its statistics and interest. In a 'foreword,' Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, the President of the New York Zoological Society, writes in clear and decisive warning. He speaks of the forceful pages of this book as reminding him of the sounding of the great bells in the watch-towers of the cities of the Middle Ages, which called to arms the citizens to protect their homes, their

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\* *Our Vanishing Wild Life*, by WILLIAM T. HORNADAY, Director of the New York Zoological Park, etc. With maps and illustrations.

New York: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, 1913.

liberties, and their happiness. "The whole earth," writes Professor Osborn, "is a poorer place to live in when a colony of exquisite Egrets or Birds of Paradise is destroyed in order that the plumes may decorate the hat of some lady of fashion, and ultimately find their way into the rubbish heap." . . . "The facts and figures set forth in this volume will astonish all those lovers of Nature and friends of the animal world who are living in a false or imaginary sense of security. The logic of these facts is inexorable."

There are 44 chapters, each one teeming with interest for the ornithologist and the humane hearted, but of such a nature that if the pages of this book are perused before bed-time, one wonders what form of night-mare one will have to go through, during sleep? What concerns us in England in the first place is to be especially found in the chapter upon the "Extermination of birds for women's hats," for London has the greatest feather market in the world, the feather industry *wants the money*, and the London feather industry is willing to spend money in fighting to retain its strangle-hold on the unprotected birds of the world.

Our Society was founded for the study of British and foreign birds in freedom and captivity. We who are members love them in their freedom, and when we limit that freedom by keeping a few of them in what is called captivity, we still afford them liberty to live, liberty to sing, liberty to propagate their species, as the granting of medals to various members for the latter accomplishment, proves. But the captivity which means unmerciful destruction for mere gourmandizing and adornment of hats for personal vanity, we will have none of. We aviculturists love our birds, and when we read Mr. Hornaday's account of "the Bird tragedy on Laysan Island"—Chap. XIV.—we must needs rise up and turn militant, because "London has the greatest feather-market in the world." On Layson **300,000** albatrosses, gulls, and terns, were butchered with the most revolting and heartless cruelty during the space of several consecutive months, the wings being cut from living birds which were left to die of hemorrhage. There is a photograph in the book, taken in 1911, showing acres of albatross bones bleaching in the sun: the feathers of which birds have been used to trim and "*adorn*" the hats of the women of "civilized" nations! "What the eye does not see the

heart does not grieve for" is totally untrue. Most of us have never witnessed, and never will in *this* life, the Paradise Birds spreading their nuptial plumes in the forests of New Guinea; the colonies of the White Egrets, flying in companies against an azure sky; the splendid Crowned Pigeons drumming out their resounding notes in their native jungles; the Humming Birds glittering with all the jewels of the earth, as they flash amongst the valleys and mountains of the great continent of South America; but for all that we like to know they are there, we like to ponder upon the marvels of age-long evolution which has developed them into what they are; and, unless man steps in, will still develop them into what they will be.

But that is the whole point of "Our Vanishing Wild Life"! Man and woman *has* stepped in—man to kill, woman to wear!

The book is full of illustrations, amongst which are excellent portraits of some of the well-known birds of the United States, that of the merry Rose-breasted Grosbeak being especially good.

It is a book to possess, and a book to give away: but do not give away your only copy, unless perchance by so doing you may convert one sinner.

H. D. A.

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#### NESTS AND EGGS OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS.

Part I. of the fourth volume of the second edition of Mr. North's magnificent work, the previous parts of which have already been noticed in this journal, is to hand, and deals with the Ibises, Spoonbills, Herons, Storks, Swans, Geese and Ducks. Written in the very thorough and exhaustive style characteristic of Mr. North's work, and containing very full field notes, it forms a most useful and valuable work on the groups of which it treats.

Of the splendid Straw-necked Ibis, the author tells us that it has been distinguished by some pastoralists as the most useful bird in Australia, destroying as it does vast quantities of injurious insects of all kinds.

A long account is given of the Nankeen Night-Heron, which reminds the writer of a most interesting sight he witnessed one evening at dusk in the Zoological Gardens at Melbourne. Walking round with the Director, as we approached a lake we noticed that every tall tree in its vicinity was covered with these birds, while

others continued to arrive, preparatory to their descent upon the edges of the ponds and streams in the neighbourhood.

A curious habit of the Maned Goose or "Wood Duck" is recorded by one of Mr. North's correspondents, namely, that of a pair taking charge of the young of several other pairs, besides their own. "Where they breed in great numbers," writes Mr. Thos. P. Austin, "one pair of old birds will sometimes take possession of several families. At Wambiana Station, on the Macquarie River, my brother and self saw a pair of old birds with over fifty young; we tried to count them, but could not, but were sure there were over fifty, and we could easily distinguish four different clutches, probably more."

It is curious that two species of Teal so closely allied as are the Chestnut-breasted and Slender Teal should inhabit the same country, although one is more generally distributed than the other. Mr. North gives full accounts of both these species which have confused many ornithologists. In the Chestnut-breasted Teal (*Nettion castaneum*) the male is brilliantly coloured, with green head and neck and red breast, but the female is practically indistinguishable from the two sexes of the Slender Teal (*N. gibberifrons*). The former, of which several may be seen at the London Zoological Gardens, is the rarer, occurring chiefly round the coast line of Australia and in Tasmania, whereas the latter is widely distributed in Australia, and occurs also in New Zealand and the adjacent Islands.

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## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

### A USEFUL MEDICINE FOR GASTRO-ENTERITIS.

Mr. P. F. M. Galloway, writing of illnesses in birds, mentions that they die chiefly through lung or bowel troubles, the latter being due to gastro-enteritis.

He says—"The symptoms are these—A bird that has been looking nice and tight in feather is suddenly seen to look soft in feather. It eats well, but loses flesh rapidly, which is due to the pain in the bowels, causing the bird to look puffed out and soft."

Mr. Galloway then goes on to speak of Ditchfield's Tonic Drops, which he says he tried with a severe test. A Golden-crested Wren was very bad with gastro-enteritis. The little bird was picked up from the floor of an aviary, and

two small drops, undiluted, were put into its mouth. It was then placed on a perch in a cage, but it fell on its back, to be once more put up, when it fell forward and shuffled along into the corner of the cage, putting its head under its feathers and seeming in a hopeless way.

In half-an-hour's time it was up on a perch—its insectivorous food was taken away, and only fresh insects given it, and twenty drops of the same tonic in a tablespoonful of *warm* water, as cold drink increases the pain, and birds with this disease are thirsty. At noon the little Goldcrest was drinking the medicine, and also feeding, looking certainly better.

Mr. Galloway had to be absent from home after that, until 4 p.m., when he found this small creature as tight in feather as possible, quite lively, and all its insect food eaten up! "The marvellous thing was," Mr. Galloway says, "that in nine hours after having taken the medicine, the bird *regained* nearly "all its lost flesh, and at night, on handling it, it was quite plump."

HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

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#### CURIOUS FRIENDSHIPS.

SIR,—On pp. 183-4 of our last number, some notes appeared of curious friendships amongst Mrs. Noble's birds. The same kind of thing has happened here more than once. For instance:—

In July, 1886, I obtained a male Black-backed Piping-Crow—a rare species in those days. After a while, I introduced a female Chinese Jay-Thrush into the same aviary, who, finding the Piper unattached, quickly sought his protection, and very soon the two were fast friends. Not only did they associate together and sit side-by-side during the day, but they invariably slept together, the comparatively small Jay-Thrush cuddling up for warmth and safety amongst the feathers of her stalwart champion.

In the course of time, I obtained a male Chinese Jay-Thrush, and placed him along with the other birds. Alas for the fickleness and ingratitude of the sex! The little woman, without a moment's hesitation, without even a chirp of thanks, forthwith turned tail on her trusty guardian who had watched over her so faithfully when he might have eaten her (and it would have served her right)—*and went off after the other fellow!*

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

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#### AN AVIARY BURNT.

SIR,—I feel sure that other aviculturists will sympathise in the loss of all my best birds that I sustained the night of April 5th.

I have a large cage aviary divided into two parts, all facing south, and in the day the glass shutters are down and at night they are put up. It is an ideal aviary, the only thing wanting are extra wire runs at each end. As I have some birds that like warmth I tried to heat the building from the house by pipes and acetelene gas, but as I thought it unsafe and gave off fumes I did not try it one day but took it out and went to the expense of a boiler and hot water

apparatus. The entrance, with double wire doors, was at the back and the heating boiler was surrounded by galvanized iron with a large air space between it and the aviary. It has been working satisfactorily since January.

The whole building is tarred outside and creosoted inside, except the front which was newly painted, and it was about fifty yards from the house in a line with my bedroom. I woke about 4 a.m. with a light in my room and my first thought was the house was on fire, then I looked and saw enormous flames coming out of the aviary. Even from that distance I could see it was hopeless. Nothing could be done to save the birds and the only thing is, I hope the fumes of creosote overtook them and stupefied them before being burnt.

We prevented the surrounding bushes from catching fire and luckily the wind blew the flames away from the house over the lawn. There is not a plant left standing.

Amongst some of the birds were a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, two Argentine Thrushes (imported personally), one pair Orange-breasted Ground Thrushes, pair Green Cardinals, Blue Budgerigars, Gouldians, pair Parrot Finches (breeders), Stonechat, Diamond, Long-tailed, Grass and other Finches, in all about forty birds and some very tame.

I cannot think how the aviary got on fire. It is very sad, to think I put in the apparatus to make the birds happy and safe from fire and now this has occurred. I have used a paraffin stove in the lower aviary, with great fear, some years past during intense frosts. I once tried a carbon stove in the aviary that was burnt, but that gave off fumes and killed eight birds and I luckily discovered it in time to save the lot.

M. C. HAWKE.

#### THE HABITS OF *LIOTHRIX LUTEA*.

SIR,—Dr. Butler's able article on the sexes of *Liothrix lutea* which appears in the current issue of the *Avicultural Magazine* will, doubtless, have been read with interest by admirers of this engaging species—now so commonly kept by bird-lovers; and his notes, aided by the beautifully-coloured plate, cannot fail to prove of value to those aviculturists who have hitherto experienced difficulty in distinguishing between the male and female bird.

That this difficulty is very real is testified to by the fact that very many experts of considerable experience have found the sexing of *L. lutea* a veritable stumbling-block; small wonder, then, that amateur bird-keepers are so easily deceived. If a word of advice be acceptable to such—one would counsel a rigid avoidance of all consignments of so-called cheap birds when the purchase of a male specimen is in contemplation; one's experience in matters of this kind is usually bought dearly, and it will be found to pay best in the long run to put down a fair price and get the genuine article, which can generally be accomplished by going in the first place to a reliable dealer, *verb. sap.*

One point in Dr. Butler's notes would seem to be of special interest, viz. : his reference to the Tit-like habits of *L. lutea*, and the expressed opinion that this species does not hold its prey under its claws in order to pick it to pieces.

My own experience is somewhat at variance with that quoted by the talented author, for I have recently observed the male of a pair of Hill Tits in my possession vigorously hammering at a piece of fibre held between the claws of one foot; whilst as I write these notes, both the male and female—separately caged—are each engaged in tearing piecemeal at a soaked currant held in a similar manner—the cock on the floor of his cage, and the hen on her perch. Those who have studied the habits of our British Titmice will, no doubt, be familiar with this characteristic method of “negotiating” a more than usually tough morsel.

If I may be permitted to mention yet another peculiarity in the behaviour of my Hill Tits, it is the curious habit they have of occasionally throwing back their heads whilst on the perch—often to such an extent as to overbalance themselves and fall fluttering to the ground. I do not remember to have seen this recorded as characteristic of this species, but from a note which appears in the excellent little work on Bird-keeping by C. E. Dyson, published in 1878, it appears that the habit was observed in the early days of its importation. The author writes—“It (the Hill Tit) has only been known in England a very little while. Some birds brought from China died in their voyage before they reached the Cape, from being fed improperly, entirely on seed, with the exception of a few flies caught in the cabin each day. They were known on board as Tumblers, from a curious habit of falling backwards from their perch and alighting on their legs, but I have not heard of this as common to others of the species, so it may have been due to giddiness or weakness from want of nourishing food.”

The cause here suggested certainly does not apply to my birds, which are in perfect health and condition.

A. A. GOODALL.

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#### NOTES FROM BENHAM VALENCE [BERKS].

One pair of Black-necked Swans hatched out five young ones on the 1st of April. Another pair had their first egg on the same day.

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Eleven semi-wild Mute Swans come to and leave the lake regularly, sometimes passing the whole day there, and then all rising on the wing together towards sunset, wending their way ‘en masse’ up the Kennet Valley to pastures new. They travel at a great rate when flying, certainly faster than a train.

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The first Sand Martins were seen on the 17th of March, and the first Nightingale was heard on Easter Day. the 27th.

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Mr. ASTLEY’S pair of Chestnut-breasted Blue Rock Thrushes (*Petrocincla erythrogastra*) underwent a complete vernal moult, commencing in the middle of March, including the tail and certainly the *secondaries* of the wings. The European Rock Thrush (*P. saxatilis*) has a vernal moult, but does not change the

tail and larger wing feathers. The European *Blue* Rock Thrush, on the other hand, merely changes the colour of the head, without shedding any feathers, the crown becoming a brighter silvery blue-grey.

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Mr. ASTLEY has a true pair of the lovely little Himalayan Blue-headed Rock Thrush, brought over by Major G. A. Perreau. (*Petrocincla cinchloyincha*)—the male, a small and very glorified edition of the European Rock Thrush (*P. saxatilis*), with a white patch in the middle of the wings, instead of on the lower part of the back.

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#### ANOTHER INDIAN COLLECTION.

Mr. W. FROST is on his way home with a fine collection of Indian birds, a good number of which are new to aviculture, including the beautiful Blue Nuthatch (*Sitta frontalis*), the tiny Chestnut-crowned Tesia (*T. castaneocoronata*); the Spotted Forktail: two or three species of Wagtails, and also of Chats; little Blue and White and other Flycatchers; Golden Bush Robins, besides many others. We hope he will be able to land them safely and in good health.

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#### THE GREAT NILTAVA.

Mr. A. EZRA secured the male of the pair of *Niltava grandis*, brought home by Major Perreau, a Niltava the male of which is a fine deep blue and black, whilst the female is pale brown with a small streak of blue on each side of the neck. It was certainly a pity that a compulsory separation was granted, especially as birds in pairs are so often more attractive than single ones, the male and female, when differing greatly in colouring, as in the Niltavas, acting as a foil the one to the other in their individual beauty. The great Niltava is a good deal larger than the other species. We understand that Major Perreau has presented the female to the Zoological Society.

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NEW MEMBERS.

- H.H. THE DUCHESS OF TECK, 4, Devonshire Place, London, W.  
THE RIGHT HONBLE. SIR EDWARD GREY, K.G., Fallodon, Christon Bank,  
Northumberland.  
THE LADY ROSEMARY PORTAL, Kingsclere House, Hants.  
Mr. ALBERT E. JAMRACH, 180, Saint George Street, London, E.  
Mr. RICHARD SAHER DE Q. QUINCEY, "Inglewood," Chislehurst, Kent.  
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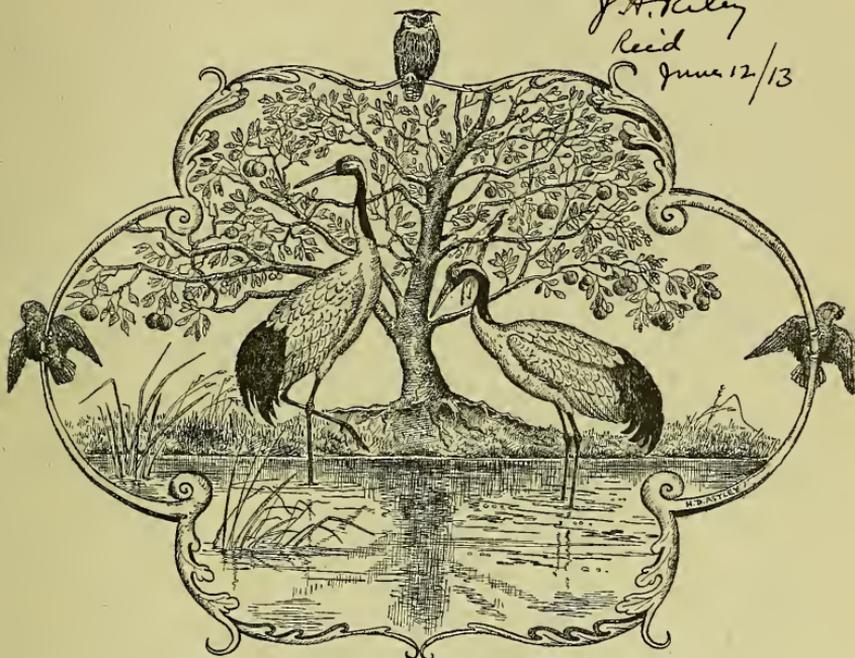
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JUNE,  
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WHITE-NECKED CRANES.

# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

## AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

*Third Series.—Vol. IV.—No 8.—All rights reserved.*

JUNE, 1913.

### WHITE - NECKED CRANES.

*Anthropoides leucauchen.*

By F. E. BLAAUW, C.M.Z.S.

*Author of "A Monograph of the Cranes."*

The Crane family is a family of very ornamental birds, being also hardy and easily kept in confinement. They have one drawback, however, and that is that they are very destructive to green turf and gardens in general, for they are constantly looking for worms, and if the soil is at all soft the grass is soon nowhere! A marsh is perhaps the best place to keep them in, but not everybody has a marsh at his disposal.

The White-necked Crane—of which a group is shown in the illustration—is one of the most striking looking, if perhaps not the most beautiful of all the Cranes. This bird was formerly very difficult to get and very expensive, and the pair which I have kept for many years originally cost me as much as a hundred pounds!! During the last four or five years they have been imported in numbers, and the price has gone down accordingly. I think that it is always a pity when lovely birds are imported in large numbers, as a good many people lose their interest in them, although they are just as beautiful as when they were rare.

The White-necked Crane is easy to breed: in fact, it is the only Crane which can be bred everywhere and anywhere, forming in this respect a great contrast to the white Indian Crane a near relative, which, as far as I know has never been successfully bred in confinement, clear eggs being so far the only thing obtained. You

may move your breeding pair of White Necks as much as you like, they will breed in the park, they will breed in the small enclosed garden, and they will breed in a small aviary. Although they are so very accommodating in this respect they never get on intimate terms with their owner ; at least my pair does not, and I never saw one which did.

The White Indians, and even more so the Mantchurians, will be glad to see you, and will dance and play around you when you come near them. The White-necks remain indifferent, and I believe that they prefer *not* to see you !

Very little nest is made, and one or two dry bits of grass are all they want. Here, again, they form a great contrast to the white Indians who make an elaborate nest of sticks near the edge of the pond ; fetching the material from the bottom of the water, and passing it over from one to the other.

The eggs of the White-necked Crane are almost always fertile, and the young ones grow very fast, attended to by both parents. The first plumage is brown, but a curious thing about this is that almost as soon as the bird is completely feathered, the hind neck, which was brown at first, turns a dull white in the course of a couple of weeks. This great thing achieved, the moult or colour change, stops for a while, and there seems to be no hurry about changing the rest of the feathers.

The White-necked Cranes have rather a sharp penetrating cry, which to my ear is not nearly so melodious as the cry of the White Indian or the Mantchurian. They have a peculiar way of walking, keeping themselves very erect. When they have small young ones, and you come upon the family by surprise, one of the parents feigns lameness and tumbles about in front of the intruder as if seriously ill or wounded. If you follow him he will lead you away for a good distance, then, when he thinks you are far enough away from the young ones, he will suddenly rise on his legs, dance a few paces as if in derision, and run away !

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## AMERICAN ROBIN &amp; DHYAL BIRD.

By KATHARINE CURREY.

I happen to have an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and a Dhyal Bird (*Copsychus saularis*) and a very delightful couple they are; so utterly different in nature, the best of friends when each is in his home cage, singing to one another in melodious strains, but enemies if one is loose, and flies up to the other's cage. They scream with rage, and there seems to be a good deal of jealousy mixed with it, chiefly on the part of the one that is not loose. So attached are they to their cages that it is safe to let each out in the garden for a flight.

The Dhyal Bird, "Dick," loves to cling to the creepers on the house and look for insects, but at the sight of the mealworm tub he flies to it with a loud scream. There is a very large Rookery in some old beeches overlooking the garden, and Dick imitates, or tries to, the cawing of the Rooks, but it is a shrill scream with him. He sings, too, very sweetly, in company with "Rob," who is a beautiful songster. He once flew far away into a hay field, but was easily caught. The Ringdoves were the cause of this, for he has a great dislike to Doves, and while loose in the verandah, hopping about quietly, a Ringdove chanced to fly in, whereupon Rob rushed at it, and chased it out of the garden away to some fields. The Dhyal bird is the cleverest of all the birds I have ever kept—sharp as a needle and very fond of a game of play, especially with a coloured stone or bit of stuff. He is in perfect health, and has been out in the garden in a lawn aviary every day and all day long this winter, with the exception of two days, one of fog and the other a biting east wind. He was very glad to get out again, and at once took a 'grass bath,' sitting in the grass and fluttering his wings as if he were bathing. He bathes in quite cold water, even after a frost. Of the two, I should say Rob is the least hardy, but he splashes into his cold bath every day, again and again, like a Thrush.

The birds in their lawn cages are visited by numbers of their wild companions—Blackbirds, Thrushes, Robins, Chaffinches, Greenfinches, Hedge-Sparrows, Wrens, Tits, and the wicked House- and Tree Sparrows, who try to keep all other birds away. No birds are

allowed to be persecuted in our garden, on the contrary, all are encouraged, the result being that the fruit-trees and vegetables are always clear of insects and vermin, with good crops of all. Yellow crocuses, being a favourite toy of the House-Sparrow, are guarded by red worsted, stretched round and across them. Not a single flower is touched.

I may mention that my Ruddy Turtle Doves and Afras have been out in an unheated aviary all the winter, and are out now, merely sheltered from the north and east.

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## FOR LOVE OF SCIENCE.

By ARTHUR G. BUTLER, Ph.D.

In a recent review which I wrote of one of the pamphlets issued by the Animals' Friend Society, I stated that well-meaning persons who wrote pamphlets of this character were hindering the advancement of Science. In an article entitled "For Love of Birds," our Member Mrs. Currey observes that I accuse the pamphlet in question of hindering the advancement of Science by calling attention to many acts of cruelty to "animals and birds" \* that go on unchecked." It would be impolite for me to contradict a lady, but in justice to myself it is only fair to ask others to look at that review and decide for themselves in the first place whether I accuse the pamphlet or the person who wrote it, and in the second place whether I did not agree with it in my condemnation of all acts of cruelty: in fine whether I did not go beyond it in my personal feeling against what is called sport.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Societies which have sprung up of late years, with the avowed object of advocating humanitarianism, while undoubtedly doing a little good, have (owing to their refusal to look at both sides of the question) done an incalculable amount of mischief.

Years ago, before birds-nesting was made illegal, I was spending a holiday at the seaside with the object of adding to my

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\* The inverted commas are mine: all living creatures are animals, not beasts alone.

collection of butterflies and moths : fortunately for aviculture these insects were unusually scarce, and so I turned my attention to collecting eggs. When I got home I naturally wished to name my specimens, and therefore procured Hewitson's British Birds-eggs, but found his plates almost entirely useless for the purpose, because he only gave one or perhaps two illustrations of each kind of egg. This fact determined me to produce a work which would give some idea of the variations existing in the commoner eggs, and to this end I not only collected long series of eggs, but also of nests of as many species as possible. The result was first "A Handbook of British Oölogy" illustrated by myself, and later "Bird's Eggs of the British Isles" illustrated by Frohawk.

Now, whatever opinion may be held by scientists respecting the value of the above two books as a help to the study of Oölogy ; the fact cannot be disputed that they have conclusively proved the enormous variability to which eggs are subject, and therefore have added to the sum of human knowledge ; yet had the penalties for taking birds' eggs existed when I was still young, neither of those books would ever have seen the light.

But, supposing that books produced by me were *entirely* valueless, it by no means follows that other young men who made collections would also fail to do good work, as a result of their studies in bird-life ; yet now, if they would seek out Nature's secrets, the poseur of humanitarianism brands them as criminals ! and, having persuaded the law of the land to back him up, prosecutes these lovers of Nature without mercy.

Collecting birds' eggs led me naturally on to rearing young birds from the nest, and thus bred within me an affection for my younger feathered brothers, which has certainly not been injurious to my avicultural friends and has been admitted to be not entirely useless to Science. Now all this seems egotistical at first sight, but it must be born in mind that if an ordinary lover of Science, after taking up the study of any branch of animal life, can produce work of any value whatever ; a law which would throw obstacles in the way of a budding Darwin or Huxley would be wicked in the extreme.

No end of silly and grossly ignorant twaddle has been written respecting the cruelty of taking birds' eggs ; but, as a matter

of fact it affects the birds very little indeed. If a House-Martin's nest containing eggs be knocked down (a frequent event in country-places where good housewives sometimes object strongly to this form of mural decoration) you may see the old birds busy within the hour building again, and so it is with many other birds. Unless it is the last nest of the season which is taken, it makes no difference to the number of young reared. Many of our wild birds, if materials are handy, can build a nest in a day (as I have proved on several occasions) and few of the smaller birds, unless cold or heavy rains intervene, take more than three days; of course the Long-tailed Tit is a notable exception, but his nest is a marvel of beauty when completed, and not built in the slap-dash mechanical fashion adopted by a Finch or a Thrush.

To take nest after nest of eggs produced by the same bird is, of course, abominably cruel; but even that cruelty, practised in 1872 upon the Wryneck by a collector who took no less than forty-two eggs from one nest, proved at least that the removal of a single sitting could have no injurious effect upon such fertile creatures as birds; if it did, how could poultry-farmers be excused for robbing their fowls continuously? but, of course, that detail would not occur to the wild bird protection faddist, besides to call in question the morality of robbing the poor domestic hen would interfere with the agitator's own comfort. Depend upon it, the laws of Moses were quite stringent enough, but even they permitted birds-nesting.

I never encouraged cottagers' children to take eggs, because they either collected them in order to indulge in the foolish game of hop-egg, in which the child who smashed the greatest number as he hopped across them was proclaimed the victor; or they threaded them on strings to hang up as ornaments; but the amount of actual harm done by even these thoughtless collectors was infinitesimal, inasmuch as they rarely found any but the commonest and most easily discovered nests, such as those of the Blackbird and Thrush.

Then again I never took nests needlessly; and at the present time nothing gives me more pleasure than to discover nests in my own garden, to watch the growth of the young birds, to guard them (so far as it is possible) from the murderous attacks of feline vermin, and hail with delight their flight from the parental home; even

though I know that presently they will reward me by rooting up plants, scattering manure over my paths, and later on digging holes in my apples and eating my cherries.

Well, so much for birds-nesting, which has been made a punishable offence through the efforts of the Wild Bird Protectionists: next we come to the hand-rearing of our native birds which has also been denounced as cruel. Our present Editor, Mr. Astley, has ably written on the delightful companionship afforded by a hand-reared Wheatear, and my household, as well as many friends, experienced the greatest pleasure some years ago in watching, talking to, and playing games with a hand-reared Pied Wagtail. Nobody, unless he had spent an hour or two in the company of that bird, would have credited for a moment the extraordinary intelligence which it displayed, the zest with which it entered into a game of touch or hide and seek. The bird was infinitely happier and lived a much fuller life than it could have done in freedom; moreover I rescued it from what would have been almost certain death, a marauding cat having already devoured its brothers and sisters when I came upon it shivering against a fence after it had sprung from the nest. The present law would prosecute anybody who, through pity, adopted one of these poor victims to the modern tendency to keep four-footed pests, and made it a child of the home; thus it gives the cat a right to rend and maim a creature infinitely more beautiful, more intelligent and more lovable than itself, and excuses the brutality of its action on the ground of its being a cat's nature to delight in destroying life; so the man who would make a friend of the helpless creature and render its life a continuous joy, is deemed worthy of punishment.

Does the so-called Bird-protectionist really believe that in interfering with man's undoubted right to claim dominion over the fowls of the air, he is doing the birds themselves any good at all; or is his action dictated solely by a love for notoriety, for a malicious pleasure in meddling with concerns respecting which he is not only profoundly ignorant, but concerning which he does not desire even to know the actual truth? I am afraid, from the constant repetition in his pamphlets of statements which have long been proved unsound, that there can be only one answer to this.

Now, as regards bird-catchers, who have been driven from pillar to post, persecuted and prosecuted for many years past, because in the winter when their usual work was slack, they were able to go out with their nets and pick up a precarious living and so keep their wives and children from starving; they have been as a body accused of wanton cruelty and many another crime; but I have found most of them industrious, sober and most intelligent, even though uneducated men; they taught me several interesting facts about birds respecting which previously I had no knowledge. Of course, there were occasional exceptions, as in all other businesses, but it is unfair to condemn the whole class for the sins of the occasional rascal.

And what did the late talented observer, Herr. Gätke, remark as to man's asserted reduction of the numbers of birds?—"To a witness—of the enormous passage of migrants, of the myriads of individuals which, on autumn nights, travel past this island, like the flakes of a snow-storm, not only within the area of the light-house, but for miles north and south out to sea, these complaints seem quite incomprehensible. It is surely impossible that the hand of man can exercise any perceptible influence on such enormous migration streams."

A lot of absolute nonsense has been written about the decrease of Goldfinches and other birds in England, and the blame has been put upon the bird-catchers; as if they alone were responsible and the comparatively few birds captured in their nets made any appreciable difference to the many millions of these birds born each year in Europe. Of course where there is a decrease in numbers it is due entirely to the cutting down of timber and reclaiming of waste land formerly covered with thistle and teasle, upon which these birds delight to feed. When on migration in the spring it is not to be expected that Goldfinches or any other birds should settle down in a locality where they can neither find suitable nesting-places nor food which appeals to them.

The actual effect of the pretended humanitarianism agitated for by English protectionists has been to hamper the honest poor in providing their children with the necessaries of life, while at the same time dooming a greater number of lovely song-birds to

slaughter by the French and Italian peasantry, who capture them in countless numbers during migration and eat them, even the tiny Goldcrest not being allowed to escape.

To what does all this misplaced zeal tend? We know that the desire and aim of these reformers is to put an entire stop to bird-keeping throughout the world. The mischief they have already done is enormous: already most of the native birds of the United States and Australia are so strictly protected that students of bird-life in this country are only able to obtain them at an exorbitant price. That the birds of New Zealand are protected is perhaps just as well, inasmuch as some of them, owing chiefly to the efforts of the natives, had become extinct or were becoming extremely scarce, but to prevent a few thousand Australian, North American or European birds being captured each year, and so hinder earnest Nature-students from working out their life history and recording many facts previously unknown to science, seems not only injurious but futile. The capture of one in perhaps ten thousand individuals ranging over enormous tracts of country, can make no appreciable difference to the preservation of the species; whereas it may make a considerable difference to ornithological knowledge.

The well-known fact that one or two species have in the past been so persecuted by farmers and others, either on account of the depredations which they have committed upon crops, or because they made excellent food, that they have been well-nigh exterminated, does not justify the hindrance of scientific research by the wholesale protection of every non-injurious native bird. In expressing these opinions I can claim to be personally quite disinterested, inasmuch as at my age it is highly improbable that I shall have an opportunity to do much more for science.

And now the question arises as to whether the birds themselves will benefit by wholesale stringent protection: in this country, at any rate, the indiscriminate destruction of birds of prey and of such vermin as stoats and wild cats, which formerly broke up bird families to a considerable extent, added to total immunity from man's action, must necessarily result in constant inbreeding between brothers and sisters, thus weakening the stock and producing a tendency towards final extinction of species. Already we see one

result of this increasing weakness, in the frequent occurrence of albinism in our wild birds : where formerly a white or pied bird was regarded as a rarity, at the present time not a year passes in which one does not see several in one's own garden, while the records of such aberrations appearing in papers devoted to birds are increasingly frequent.

No good was ever done by man interfering, in attempts to assist Nature ; he only succeeds in disturbing the balance of things : if he would retain in the country the native birds which have been a delight to all lovers of sweet sounds and chaste colours, let him do his utmost to preserve for their use as many bird-sanctuaries as possible and, if he will, put up numerous nesting-boxes for the use of his feathered friends ; but, excepting in the case of rare and occasional visitors to our shores, which ought to be allowed the opportunity of rearing families amongst us, I believe firmly that, in addition to the injury done by discouraging the study of Natural History in the young, laws for the absolute preservation of all native birds and for the prevention of their capture for observation in aviaries, will not prove of any benefit to the birds themselves ; but very much the reverse.

With regard to the feather trade, of course it needs supervision in order to prevent the wholesale destruction of beautiful species ; but it has been proved in some cases that the accounts published with a view to working upon the feelings of the soft-hearted have been greatly exaggerated. I cannot say that I like to see feathers and bird-skins in ladies' head-coverings ; it is a survival of savagery, but if they must have them, domesticated birds assisted by the dyer will always suffice to produce effects which should rejoice the heart of even a queen of the cannibal islands. On the other hand it must be borne in mind, as pointed out by Dr. A. Menegaux in his admirable treatise entitled "Bird Protection and the Feather Trade" \* that "We must take our latter-day surroundings into consideration and remember that we may not interfere unduly with the means of livelihood now guaranteed for thousands by the use of natural products. In Paris alone are more than 600

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\* SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & CO., LTD. I have to thank Mr. ALLEN SILVER for lending me this pamphlet.

factories and workshops for the treatment of feathers. The turnover is more than six million pounds sterling a year, and more than 50,000 men and women derive a living from the manufacture and industries associated with it.

Then, again, as touching the destruction of Egrets, about which more capital has been made by the protectionist party than anything else, we read (p. 9):—"It is not necessary to slaughter Egrets to obtain their ornamental feathers. Indeed, Mr. Geay, who lived and travelled for many years in Venezuela, Darien and French Guinea, has noticed that in moulting time you find these elegant feathers scattered here and there in large quantities on the bushes and at the foot of the trees near the "lagunos" and small rivers. Natives pick up these feathers, which would else be lost, by the kilo, and sell them to the trade without any damage to either species of heron. When collected in proper time, these feathers are almost as fine as those of a shot bird. Soiled feathers easily regain their beautiful snowy white by the peroxide water treatment. In no case are they taken from the living bird."

This statement is confirmed by Mr. Leon Laglaize who travelled for two years in the valleys of Orinoco and Apure. But I need not make further quotations from this essay since its cost is only 6d. and anybody interested in the subject can readily secure a copy and study it for himself.

Finally, no real lover of birds objects to a certain amount of reasonable protection, but in the present day, restrictions upon the liberty of the subject are becoming every year more unbearable, the masses are being tormented for the self-glorification of a few mistaken sentimentalists and the means of earning an honest livelihood are being continually decreased. If, to the discouraging of the laudable instincts of budding naturalists, to the enfeebling of the children of would-be bird-catchers (by depriving them of food at a time when it is most needed), be added the total abolition of the trade in living birds, the misery resulting to many thousands will be simply appalling. Surely to anybody with a spark of real humanity it would be infinitely better that a thousand birds should spend their lives in aviaries than that one human being should perish from hunger or be reduced to want.

As for birds being unhappy in partial captivity, that we know to be the veriest nonsense: indeed there are scores of recorded instances in which, when liberated, they have voluntarily returned to their former owners: this is not surprising when one considers that a wild bird is subject to frequent alarms from predaceous birds and beasts, that it often has much difficulty in obtaining sufficient food to satisfy it, and that in the winter in this country it is exposed to all the bitter and trying vicissitudes of our most uncertain climate.

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## MAJOR HORSBRUGH'S INDIAN COLLECTION.

In the first week of May, Mr. Frost brought back to England a wonderful collection of birds, which were principally inhabitants of the Himalayas.

Major Horsbrugh himself travelled to Genoa to meet the ship which had borne so many treasures from India, and I, joining him at Milan, not only acted as interpreter with regard to various arrangements with the Italian railway officials, but also had the privilege of seeing the collection of 400 birds on board the steamer after she had come alongside the quay in the far-famed Genoese port. Having some few hours in Milan, we took the opportunity of visiting the Turati collection of stuffed birds, which Professor Giacinto Martorelli, the Director, showed us with all the courtesy and kindness that a kind and courteous Italian can show. It is an extremely fine collection, one of the best in the world, and we only had time to merely glance at portions of it, especially taking notice of stuffed skins of some of those birds which we hoped to see alive two days afterwards.

On the following day, after our arrival at Genoa, there was much conversation with the master of the principal station, and also with a custom house official. All went well, which is a matter of congratulation in Italy, where officials are concerned, and arrangements were duly arrived at whereby Major Horsbrugh could take a certain number of the more delicate birds by rail from Genoa to Paris, and so on to England.

Thus Friday, the 25th of April went by, and we went to our beds, hoping and praying that the ship would not delay on the following day. But on the Saturday we were told that she would not be in before five o'clock, which one felt meant later! Not being Italians, that much-used expression of "Fa niente" or "non importa" could not spring to our lips, for we considered it *most* important that the steamer should arrive by daylight.

Can anything be more irksome than waiting and waiting in a strange city. It was a case of "Sister Anne, Sister Anne" throughout the afternoon, and Sister Anne was the agency of the Dutch steamers. Moreover, the weather was anything but nice, and the skies anything but Italian. Grey, windy, and raining. At last came the message "The steamer is sighted," and when we reached the dock at 5.45 she was just coming in.

How many birds would there be? How many had succumbed? were the questions we asked each other. And then the ship was towed alongside of the quay, when we saw Mr. Frost amongst the crowd of passengers above our heads.

"How many?" shouted Major Horsbrugh, and above the din of much Italian chatter amongst porters, etc. on the quay, we heard him answer "Four hundred." "Any Red-headed Titmice?" I shouted, and two fingers were held up for a response.

Then came an aggravating wait, whilst a doctor went on board to give a bill of health or otherwise, the yellow flag fluttering in the chilly wind until he finished his work, which we certainly came to the conclusion would have been accomplished much more quickly in England: and the dusk creeping on too! Our remarks upon Italian dawdling and dilatoriness were not exactly complimentary. It certainly was a case of "pazienza," as one is always told.

At last the yellow flag was lowered, and a confused rush began up the gangway, everybody shouting and struggling, some coming off the ship, and garrulous inconsequent Italian porters bundling on board her. And oh that dreadful dusk growing deeper every moment and the steamer in the port for not more than three hours! Having greeted Mr. Frost, we quickly made our way to the birds which were on the upper deck under canvas, one end of the improvised tent being open. There was no electric light there, no

light of any kind, except an occasional match which we struck, and the birds at the end of the shelter were nearly invisible.

The first thing I saw were three large cages full of Sunbirds; in one, no less than forty of the beautiful little Yellow-backed Sunbirds (*Ethyopyga seheriæ*) with its breast of blood red, and moustaches of glistening sapphire blue.

A quantity of Amethyst-rumped Sunbirds (*A. zeylonica*) and also of Yellow-backed Black Sunbirds, *A. saturata*, as far as one could see, looking uncommonly fit, especially considering the evening was very chilly and the ship had passed through stormy seas.

Another species—a solitary individual—which caught my eye, and which, amongst others, I carried off, was a splendid Green-breasted Pitta (*P. cucullata*). I think I remember seeing a specimen at the Crystal Palace Show some years ago, but it is a good while since this bird has been seen in England, and the one which arrived in Major Horsbrugh's collection is probably the only one in Europe.

The Scarlet and Black Minivets were a sight; three species, and one regrets that the gorgeous glow of red would fade to a dull yellow when they moult in captivity.

The large Minivets (*P. speciosus*) were especially magnificent. Major Horsbrugh took these away by land.

The list of species brought by Mr. Frost is as follows:—

|                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Red-headed Tits.                      | Silver-eared Mesias.          |
| Crested Black Tit.                    | Blue-winged Sivas.            |
| Yellow-cheeked Tits.                  | Tailor Bird.                  |
| Green-backed Tits.                    | Fire Caps.                    |
| Indian Grey Tits.                     | Brown-eared Bulbuls.          |
| Rufous-necked Laughing Thrush.        | Rufous-bellied Bulbuls.       |
| Rufous-chinned Laughing Thrushes.     | Velvet-fronted Nuthatches.    |
| Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babblers.      | Cinnamon-bellied Nuthatches.  |
| Black-throated Babbler.               | White-bellied Drongos.        |
| Orange-eyed Babbler.                  | Large Indian Minivet.         |
| Red-billed Babblers.                  | Short-billed Minivet.         |
| Yellow-breasted Babblers.             | Rosy Minivet.                 |
| Black-chinned Yuhinas.                | Small Minivets.               |
| Yellow-naped Ixulas.                  | Pied Mynah.                   |
| Small Wren Babbler.                   | Orange Gorgeted Flycatcher.   |
| Indian Whitethroats.                  | White-browed Blue Flycatcher. |
| Hardwicke's Orange-bellied Chloropsis | Rufous-bellied Niltava.       |
| Gold-fronted Chloropsis.              | Wheatears.                    |

|                                |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| White-capped Redstart.         | Yellow-backed Black-breasted Sunbird |
| Blue-fronted Redstart.         | Purple Sunbird.                      |
| Indian Redstart.               | Loten's Sunbird.                     |
| Plumbeous Redstart.            | Amethyst-rumped Sunbirds.            |
| Persian Nightingale.           | Tickell's Flower Pecker.             |
| Ruby-throated Warblers.        | Green-breasted Pitta.                |
| Golden Bush Robin.             | Pigmy Woodpeckers.                   |
| Brown-backed Robins.           | Pigmy Pied Woodpecker.               |
| Shamas.           Dyals.       | Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker.      |
| Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush.  | Golden-backed Woodpecker.            |
| Blue-headed Rock Thrushes.     | Coppersmith Barbets.                 |
| White's Thrush or              | Blue Rollers.                        |
| Small-billed Mountain Thrush.  | Glossy Calornis.                     |
| Orange-headed Ground Thrushes. | Jungle Babbler.                      |
| Maroon Orioles.                | Verditer Flycatchers.                |
| Beautiful Rosefinches.         | Crow Pheasant.                       |
| Brown Bullfinch.               | Brahminy Kites.                      |
| Large Pied Wagtails.           | Black-winged Lories.                 |
| Masked Wagtails.               | Forsten's Lory.                      |
| Blue-headed Wagtails.          | Plovers.                             |
| Indian Tree Pipit.             | Grey-winged Ouzel.                   |
| Yellow-backed Red Sunbirds.    | Tickell's Ouzel.                     |

One wonders when such rare species will be seen again, especially as I hear the Germans are now keenly exploiting India and her mountains for birds.

Major Horsbrugh is to be congratulated upon having introduced to English aviculturists many species which have been imported for the first time into Europe, and Mr. Frost must likewise be congratulated upon his success in collecting them, and his untiring zeal in keeping them alive under very difficult and adverse circumstances. Had he only brought the *Sunbirds*, he might have rested content, and perhaps for beauty and fascination these were the gems. When those crimson-breasted ones moult out, they will indeed be jewels; rubies, topaz and flecks of sapphire. One knows what it is to tend twenty or thirty birds in cages, when they are in good health and safely at home; but to look after four hundred at sea, many suffering from cramped quarters, cold winds and turbulent waters, is a task that most would shrink from and many refuse.

We hope to hear later on in more detail of some of these rare birds, as members of the Society have opportunities of writing about them.

## THE CAPERCAILLIE AT HOME.

By MARTIN CUNINGHAM.

On receiving the Editor's letter, asking for some contributions to the pages of the *Avicultural Magazine*, I thought the following very rough notes on the Capercaillie, in his home in the vast pine forests of Siberia, might prove of some small interest.

An adult cock Capercaillie in the spring is, in my humble estimation, one of the finest sights of the bird-world; my first acquaintance with him was at this time of the year. I had taken a peasant with me who knew the haunts of these birds, and we started in the evening so as to get to the forest in the dark. Driving through the pine forest we several times startled some of these birds, who went creaking through the pine tops. The least noise, though quite dark and long after roosting-time, starts these birds flying at once.

In the morning, an hour or two before sunrise, they begin to call, and it is then one has to do the stalking to get near them, as whilst calling they hear nothing, from which comes their Russian name of "Gluchar" (the deaf one). When he stops you have to do the same, as he hears the least noise when not calling, and this sudden stopping generally means being caught with one foot in the air or else in some similar and very uncomfortable attitude. When you do see him, it is well worth all the trouble, with his neck frill and tail standing out stiff against the brightening light. The call is very piercing and can be heard a long way off; it is a challenge I think, as I have never been able to find a hen anywhere near. When he is on the ground then you can be certain that there are hens about. He then does his dancing, with tail, neck, and wings spread out to their utmost limits. Taking several steps forward, he jumps into the air, and coming down again makes a loud, booming noise, not unlike a drum heard at a distance.

Only once have I ever seen two males fighting, and this gave me the first opportunity of having one of these birds alive. They were hard at it when I first saw them and, though naturally the shyest of birds, took not the least notice of me. I caught one in my hands, and it was several minutes before the other realized that there was a stranger near and solemnly stalked off. My capture

proved the most troublesome of any I have ever had since, as he refused to touch anything for the first two days; but, afterwards, whether owing to a domestic hen getting in where he was, or finding himself very hungry, he started to feed all right. He proved, however, so wild, that on my getting some young birds, which at once adapted themselves to their surroundings, I turned him loose in his beloved pine forest again.

The forest keepers have several times brought the young birds in to me before they could fly, and then I never had any trouble with them. Their food at first was hemp and Canary seed, and when they got bigger, wheat, barley and oats, also any wild berries or green food, and occasionally the ordinary water melon. They became quite tame in a very short time, and used to wander about among the domestic hens. We found, however, that we could not keep more than one cock, though even if only a few months old, owing to their continual fighting. They showed no signs of wishing to fly away, though unpinioned, and seemed quite happy.

In spite of everything I could do, I have never been able to bring any of my birds through a winter. The cold is intense, anything from 20-40° below zero, and when turning them out they got their feet frost bitten and then rapidly collapsed, but exercise of some sort they must have. In their wild state, in the winter, I have never seen one of these birds on the ground.

The nest is always very cunningly hidden, as the hen covers her eggs, and unless you happen to nearly walk on it, it is very difficult to find as she sits very close. It is generally at the foot of some tree, a slight hollow being scraped out. I have also found it several times at the foot of an ant heap, the bottom of the latter being scraped out, making a sort of tunnel for the bird to sit under.

Owing to these grand birds living only in the big pine forests, which nearly all belong to the Government and with regular keepers who prevent indiscriminate shooting, they stand a chance of surviving a long time. Without this protection and with their slow flight and big size, they would very soon have become exterminated as the Siberian peasant has not the least idea of giving any bird a chance.

*Kingan, Siberia.*

*March, 1913.*

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## THE LESSER EGRET.

*Ardea garzetta.*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., etc.

The beautiful little Egret is being cruelly and disastrously reduced in numbers, owing to the plume trade. In Europe it inhabits only the southern countries, but ranges far south in Africa, and right across the continent of Asia, and from thence down to the Malay Archipelago and Australia. It has occurred as a rare straggler in Great Britain, North Germany, and Holland, etc.

It is essentially a marsh bird, preferring swampy ground where there is plenty of aquatic vegetation, and its nesting places are often situated in the midst of vast swamps.

In "Wild Life," Vol. I., No. 1 (an extremely attractive monthly illustrated magazine, and from which I took hints for the accompanying drawing of the Egrets) there is a most interesting account written by Mr. W. Farren of his experiences amongst a nesting colony of these birds in Southern Spain.

I cannot do better than quote some of his description:—"In the nesting season they congregate in large colonies. The sites for such colonies, which are occupied year after year, are generally in well-wooded marshland, or shallow lagoons fringed with bushes and small trees. On these bushes and trees the nests are massed thickly together, and, when the eggs have been laid, and the young ones hatched, the parental instinct becomes dominant, and the birds lose much of their shyness." . . . "The 'Heronies' of the Little Egret afford, under normal conditions, one of the most exquisite spectacles of bird-life conceivable. The graceful outlines of the parent birds, now flashing white against the cloudless blue, now settling on the olive-tinted branches, now mirrored from the water as they fish—colour and movement, life and sound are here."

"Then come the hunters—and silence!"

"But for one cry—the cheeping of the slowly starving nestlings. Round them lie mutilated bodies, some—so it has been said by eye-witnesses—still throbbing with faint life. *For it is only a small patch of skin which is marketable.*"

"Fifty or sixty years ago Florida could boast of a number of nesting colonies, each consisting of thousands of Egrets. Season





LITTLE EGRETS AND NESTS.

“after season these colonies have been ‘shot out,’ with the result that, at the present time, but a few pairs of birds visit the old breeding sites!” Agitation by naturalists produced legislation of a kind for the birds’ protection; but so great were the difficulties of administering the law that further agitation was needed to establish an organized force of keepers (watchers), of whom at least one met his death at the hands of the plume-hunting gang.”

Mr. Abel Chapman and Mr. Walter Buck, authors of “Wild Spain” and “Unexplored Spain” have leased the Coto Donana for some years, which is a long narrow strip of country which stretches along the coast line for about forty miles from the north bank of the Guadalquivir. Here the marismas teem with wild-fowl in the winter, and with marsh birds in the spring. The low marshy part of the country merges into interminable marismas, stretching for miles on either side of the river.

Here where tamarisks fringe some of the lagoons, the Little Egrets, associating with Buff-backed Herons, etc. build their nests, in some cases only a few feet above the water’s surface.

Mr. Farren graphically describes his efforts at photographing some of the birds. Concealed in a small tent, which the Egrets did not seem to be frightened at, he watched them at close proximity for a length of time. He writes:—“Egrets and Buff-backed Herons flew low down over the tent, circled above the bushes, and one by one dropped with dangling legs on the branches. Their long toes seemed ill-fitted for grasping, and there was, it must be confessed, some ungainliness of action in their progress towards their nests. As they climbed down from branch to branch and raised their wings as balancers, their waving plumes and snow white primaries caught, at each step, fresh glint and play of sunshine.”

“There was much bickering and squabbling amongst them, caused as it seemed by unintentional, unavoidable trespass.”

In the Natural History Museum in New York, there is a most beautiful case of stuffed Egrets, representing the birds amidst their natural surroundings with their nests and young: and so skilfully is it done that it is difficult to forget one is not looking upon real life. These magnificent examples of the taxidermist’s art, and there are many, each one if possible more interesting than the last,

are lighted from above, after the manner of the big tanks in the Brighton Aquarium. Real material—bushes, grass, stones, etc.—are used, and are brought from the very spots in which the original scenes took place, whilst the backgrounds, painted by well-known artists, are so cunningly devised that it is often difficult to discern where the painting of grass, etc. begins and the genuine articles leave off. With the Egrets, in the foreground are portions of trees covered with long strands of lichen, amongst which the birds are perching near their nests, some of which contain eggs, some young ones, whilst you look down apparently into the depths of a weedy and slimy lagoon, lying in the heart of a tangle of forest growth, and in the distance innumerable Egrets are flying over the bushes and the water. The birds in the foreground are stuffed, those in the further distance are painted. The whole effect is intensely interesting and the work intensely skilful.

The Society for the Protection of Birds has for some years striven to trumpet from the house-tops the iniquities of the plume trade, but many women seem absolutely impervious and even callous to its reports and entreaties. Men too are to blame, for long ago a bill should have been passed by the English Government to absolutely forbid the importation of birds' plumes and skins for millinery purposes. Neither do some of those ladies who are highest in society set the example they should. Feathers of Birds of Paradise, Crowned Pigeons, Humming Birds, Egrets, etc. are still to be seen in women's hats, and there are many who do not care what the history of the slaughter is, so long as they can wear what they *think* to be smart and becoming to them. In these days of spiteful destruction at the hands of suffragettes, it is a pity that a band of these women, who can so easily make themselves notorious, do not concentrate some of their energies upon striving to put down a cruelty for which their sex is primarily responsible.

There was one woman not long ago who paid £200 for a hat—and the fact was thoroughly and blatantly advertised—because that head-gear was smothered in 'aigrettes,' the plumes of forty or fifty of the Little Egrets, which probably meant, in addition to *their* destruction, the deaths of about one hundred young birds left starving in their nests under a blazing southern sun!

In fifty years' time, at this rate, the Little Egrets will be exterminated from off the face of the earth.

In some of the States of North America, plumes of these and other birds are confiscated, whilst we in England, with all our boasting as to kindness to animals, permit our women, encouraged by the hat shops, to wear on their heads feathers which represent a mine of cruelty.

When crossing from New York on board the 'Lusitania' some five years ago, I became so indignant by seeing a woman day after day parading the decks and lounging in the saloons with a whole skin and part of another of a Greater Paradise Bird in her hat, that I finally spoke to her, asking her to pardon my effrontery and explaining to her the fact that these birds, amongst others, were being killed in hundreds and hundreds, and were becoming more and more rare every day: "Would she give up encouraging such destruction, and help to persuade others?" I told her of how more than one *man* had been murdered in the swamps of Florida, when they were acting as guardians to the Egrets.

My remarks were received with a supercilious shrug and an insolent smile. "Really" was her answer "I don't see what all this has to do with *me*, and I don't see why I shouldn't wear what I choose. So callous was her spirit, so unmelting her heart, that I replied: "Well! Madam, I have always understood that women are the gentler sex, and supposed to possess more tender feelings than men; a man is now striving, and has done so courteously, to move *your* heart; I see that it is useless, and I withdraw my apology for having taken upon myself to address you as a stranger."

If she could have served me, to judge by her expression, as the Birds of Paradise in her hat had been served she would have!! even perhaps to wearing my scalp!

On the other hand, others to whom I have appealed have answered courteously, with an explanation that they really did not realize what was entailed by the wearing of 'aigrettes,' etc. *Why* should this abominable cruelty and destruction continue when hats can be quite as becoming, and even more so, in these days of delicately manufactured artificial flowers, etc. It is said that the

London market supplies Paris, etc. with plumes; then let the London market be closed.

All this is not mere sentiment—so called—it is a deep and humane feeling that the Egrets and other birds have a right to live, and move, and have their being. I hear someone say, “Well *you imprison* birds, what about *that*?” What about it? Why this! that to keep as pets a few examples of different species, which evince their happiness by reproducing their kind, and rearing their families is a very different thing to assisting in the slaughter of thousands and thousands, aiding to bring on the extinction of species!

As a matter of fact the Little Egrets are to be obtained alive but infrequently, but when they can be, they will live happily for some years, especially if they are kept in a fairly large enclosure, where there is shallow water, and reeds and bushes. They are birds of sunny climes and should have shelter in the colder months. Fish, cut small, and meat is what they feed on, and they become quite fearless.

I have a pair of Little Egrets, [the male is somewhat larger than the female,] which will run forward to take the pieces of roach, etc. when thrown to them.

In conclusion, cannot lovers of birds, whilst doing all they can to make their living pets happy; and these can be absolutely so; try to do something definite towards abating and putting a stop to such ruthless destruction.

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## THE RUDDY-HEADED GOOSE.

*Chloëphaga rubidiceps.*

By F. E. BLAAUW, C.M.Z.S.

This Goose—a native of the southern parts of South America and the Falkland Islands—is the smallest of the genus *Chloëphaga*, and, like all the members of its family is an extremely pretty bird. It was first imported alive to England, I believe, about 1860, and bred in the Zoological Gardens between 1865 and 1870, after which time until quite recently it has only been represented there by odd specimens which have not bred.

On the continent, the species was first imported in 1886, represented by a single male at the Zoological Gardens of Antwerp, where I had the good fortune to be able to acquire it through the courtesy of the director, Mr. J. Vekemans. A couple of months later, Dr. Sclater kindly let me have a female which then lived in the Zoological Gardens of London, and from these two birds I have been able to breed a numerous progeny which, with the occasional addition of an imported bird, are almost without exception responsible for all the Ruddy-headed Geese that have been kept in captivity since 1887.

In its native land this bird is a migrating species. In Tierra del Fuego, which I visited in 1911, I saw flocks of this species ready to leave on the 11th of April, and I was told by the settlers there that the bird is a summer visitor to the island.

In the country behind Punta Arenas this bird is also a summer visitor, breeding in the rough land to the west of the town. In the private Museum of Padu Borgatella in that same town I saw goslings in down, which had been collected there. How far north they migrate in winter I am unable to say.

On Tierra del Fuego I found the birds remarkably tame near the Jente Grande bay, and in several other places. They did not mix there with the flocks of *Chloëphaga dispar*.

In confinement, I have found the Ruddy-headed Goose extremely hardy and very long lived; but to do well it *must* have as much grass as it wishes for. The young females begin to lay generally when they are two or three years old and the number of eggs laid is usually five, although I have had broods of six. The goslings, which are carefully tended by the parents, generally grow very fast, and the first plumage is like that of the parents, only that the markings are not so well defined; and the white shoulder is a little mixed with grey; also the glossy green wing bar is not present.

Before the winter the birds moult their first plumage, except the greater flight feathers, which are retained until the second moult. The female is slightly smaller than the male and has of course a different voice. Some of the adult males have a beautiful pearl grey colour about the underparts which is lacking in others, where it is replaced by deep foxy red.

The goslings in down have dark grey markings on a greyish white undersurface.

*Goolust, 1913.*

\* \* \*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY, M.A., F.Z.S., ETC.

I might supplement Mr. Blaauw's remarks upon this beautiful little goose, and record the fact that apart from his birds I have had two females, imported from the Falkland Islands one in 1900, and another in 1911. These were presented to me through the kindness of a lady living near Newbury, whose brother had them sent to her. From the 1900 bird, several were reared, mated to a gander which Mr. Blaauw sent me, and from the young goose imported not quite two years ago. I hope to have more goslings, with a strain of good fresh blood in their veins, mated as she is to one of the finest Ganders I ever saw.

That I received no more from the Falkland Islands was very unfortunate, for two others died, either on the voyage home or immediately after they arrived. However I have two breeding pairs, and with the fresh blood one ought to be able to keep up a good stock. These little Bernicles are exceedingly pugnacious in the nesting season, so that only one pair can occupy an enclosure; and last year a breeding gander nearly drove my pair of Lesser White-fronted Geese to death, although the four birds were in a large enclosure, with a pond dividing the grass land.

None of my birds have the pearl-grey on the underparts that Mr. Blaauw describes, but the foxy red is so handsome that I would not wish them otherwise. The time to see this colour is when the sun is setting, lighting up their breasts with a warm glow.

I find these geese are very fond of Melox, especially in the winter time, and it helps to keep them in good health, when grass is not abundant.

The gander is decidedly richer in the fox-red colouring than the goose, and he stands higher than his mate. When the sexes are seen together it is not at all difficult to distinguish them; and the male bird's head and upper neck is a clearer colour than the female's.

Last year, perhaps from too much in-breeding, I had one gosling out of a brood of four, which was born blind, and I could

not understand for a day or two why, when the others were feeding well, the poor baby goose made such bad shots at the food.

On picking it up, I saw that the pupils of the eyes looked lifeless. This gosling survived for three weeks, and was then taken by a rat or a stoat when the hen, under which they had been hatched was walking about outside the coop.

Certainly the Ruddy-headed Goose is one of the most handsome of its tribe, but to be able to appreciate its good looks one must see it at close quarters, so as to discern the beautiful pencilings on the feathers-

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## PETER, MY PAINTED BUNTING.

*Passerina ciris.*

By WALLACE CRAIG.

Peter was bought in a bird store in Chicago, and given to me as a present. That was on July 20th, 1891, when I was but a lad, though I had been already for some years an enthusiastic student of birds. Peter lived under my care for two and a half years, during which time he and I became intimate friends. We spent hours together. And I made frequent written records of what the bird said and did. From these old records, and from my vivid recollections, I have prepared the following little biography.

Peter was an active, intelligent and interesting pet. Though confined in a round Canary cage of the usual small size, he took abundant exercise, traversing again and again the habitual though invisible paths up and down and across his cage. One feat which specially impressed me was his starting from the lower perch, at the left of the upper one (which was at right angles), jumping up with a turn to the left, turning 270 deg. and alighting on the upper perch. He made this three-quarters turn always at the same place, and always in the same direction. Another cage habit that I recorded, was that when the cage was cleaned and fresh gravel put in, Peter walked on the floor and picked the gravel; but at other times—because of the dirt, I thought—he avoided the floor, so much so

that even if he wished a piece of food that was on the floor he would try to reach it from the lower perch.

Peter was very fond of bathing, if the water given him was not too cold. In winter I gave him the bath weekly, in summer daily. When bathing daily he did not show the same eagerness as when the bath had been withheld a few days. He always entered the bath very cautiously, as if to make sure of his footing, his bath being of the usual type with steep sides more than an inch high. He first put in one foot, usually the left, and (unless very anxious to bathe) repeated this several times before jumping in with both feet. But as soon as his feet were both firmly on the bottom he lost no more time, putting his head down and splashing vigorously.

Occasionally I let him fly out in the room. When it was time to get him back into his cage I found this difficult to accomplish, and I sometimes frightened and fatigued him in the chase. Yet I found that, once back in his cage, he was as tame as ever.

His staple food was Canary and rape seed, but he ate a great variety of other things. He tried whatever I offered to him, tested several bites, and generally swallowed at least a little of it. He ate cracker (biscuit) readily. Fruit he enjoyed—apple, orange, banana, strawberry, water melon, figs; he cared less for date. In eating a fig he took each little seed and apparently shelled it, eating only the kernel. He ate celery, and probably also lettuce and other green food. He was specially fond of spiders, and almost equally fond of insects—house flies, bluebottles, May-flies (*Ephemeridæ*); he attacked even grasshoppers. Once when I held by one wing an enormous "Mourning Horse-fly" (*Tabanus atratus*), Peter pecked the big buzzing thing, bit its head off, and ate also the body, or at least part of it. When he saw insects flying or crawling on the ceiling or walls, he tried to get out of his cage, uttering a little note, "pit, pit," which called me to get the insect for him.

All Peter's activities showed a good deal of adaptability and intelligence and what in human life we call common sense. Even within the first few days under my care he grew accustomed to his new surroundings, began to grow tame, and learned to expect the tit-bits (chiefly flies) which I brought him. For two years I

recorded that he lost one fear after another, and grew more tame. At first I killed the flies for him and dropped them into his cage; but he soon learned to take the buzzing fly from my fingers, and to come for it eagerly before my fingers reached the bars. He busily examined and tested in his bill whatever I gave him, whether edible or not. The following quotations from my note-books show typically his common-sense ways of meeting conditions.

“September 15th, 1892. I am sorry to say that I forgot to feed Peter yesterday. This morning when I went near him he looked so anxiously at my hands, I thought he wanted a fly, so I gave him one. As I took his water to him he watched and waited and drank as soon as it was given to him. He acted similarly as I brought his seed.”

“October 25th, 1893. I must have forgotten to give Peter water yesterday. [Believe me! This happened very rarely.] This morning, when I was taking his water cup out, he came down and stuck his head as far as he could into the lip of it, not being at all afraid of my hands. When I took him his water, he began to drink before the cup was right in.”

In both the above cases Peter evidently did his best to tell me what he wanted.

“January 15th, 1893. Peter seems to have more intelligence than the Canary, in several ways. Peter seldom refuses a bath when the bird-bath full of tepid water is given to him (once a week just now), and he sometimes tries to bathe in his drinking cup: the Canary never bathes, but pretends to in his cup. The Canary is not afraid of anybody going near him, or even making a noise or moving quickly; but if they put his food in his cage he tries to fight, and is shy of taking food from the hand. Peter is just the opposite of this: If a person of the house goes near him gently he is tame and friendly, but if they approach boisterously he is frightened; and when gone to roost he is shy. But if anyone offers him a fly he is not only tame but exceedingly anxious to get to the hand that bears it; and now when flies are scarce, or wanting, he often comes to the side of his cage and looks at my hands (he knows a hand) to see if I have a fly for him. Flies are his great dainties: when I fix a piece of fruit between the bars of his cage,

he looks into my hand for a fly ; when I take my hand away, he tastes the fruit."

Peter had two sorts of song : a loud song, consisting of a loud, clear note repeated four or more times without variation ; and a soft song, which was a pleasing, varied warble. The loud song was sometimes harsh and piercing, sometimes more moderate and agreeable. " In uttering it he stands up with his head thrown back and opens his bill widely at each note. His whole body moves as a result of the energy with which he utters the strain." The loud song seemed to be given chiefly in the morning, but the warble might be heard through the middle of the day. The loud song seemed to be confined to the summer, whereas the warble was given beautifully in December. Besides the two songs, Peter gave a small variety of single notes, with divers meanings. One was given, as we have said, when he eagerly sought an insect which was out of his reach.

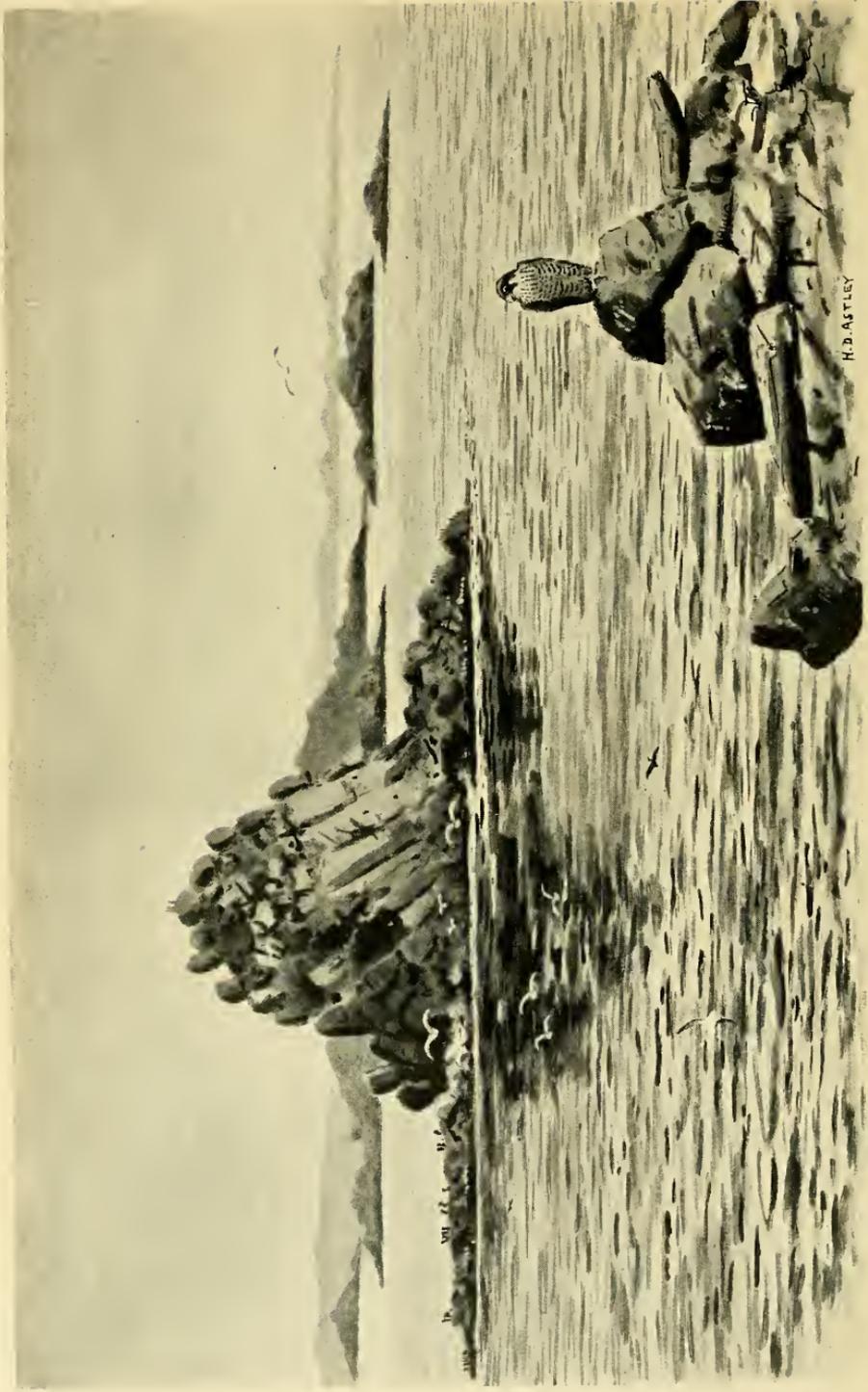
The first time my bird moulted he lost all, or almost all the red in his plumage. "The red round his eye was replaced by dusky, the red of his underparts became yellow, and that of his rump green in continuance of his green back." Knowing that iron enters into the composition of many pigments, I put a rusty nail into his drinking water. The nail was put into the cup in the summer (it must have been the summer of 1893) and was kept there permanently. When the bird moulted the next autumn, some of the new feathers came in with the normal red colour, but others did not, so that the underparts were irregularly patched red and yellow. I hoped that in another year the red would be completely restored, but the death of the bird frustrated my hopes. Whether the iron in the drinking water caused the restoration of red colour, is very doubtful ; but I give the facts as observed.

Peter died suddenly, the cause of death being unknown, on January 23rd, 1894. I was truly sorry at the death of a bird who had become so friendly and confiding.

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H. B. ASTLEY

CASTLE BRYHER, SCILLY ISLES.  
WHERE THE PEREGRINES NEST.

## MEMBERS' TEA &amp; PROPOSED DINNER.

At the last Meeting of the Council of the Avicultural Society it was decided to give afternoon tea to the Members in the Fellows' Tea Pavilion in the Zoological Gardens at four p.m. on Friday, June 20th, the day of the summer Meeting of the Council. Each member is invited to bring one friend; and those who wish to be present are requested to inform the Hon. Secretary not later than Monday, June 15th. so that the number to be provided for may be known.

It was also suggested at the Council that some members and their friends might like to dine together in the Zoological Gardens, at seven o'clock in the evening of the same day; the price of the dinner not to exceed 5/- per head, exclusive of wine. The necessary arrangements for this can be made, if four days notice be given to the Secretary.

R. I. POCKOCK, *Hon. Sec.*,

Zoological Society, Regent's Park, N.W.

## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &amp;c.

## ENFORCING THE AIGRETTE LAW.

In "Bird-Lore" of Sept.-Oct., 1912, a very interesting bi-monthly Magazine, which is devoted to the study and protection of Birds in the United States, and which is the official organ of the Audubon Societies (Mr. Frank M. Chapman being the Editor) we quote the following:—

"At the conclusion of the Meeting of the National Association of Game Commissioners in Denver, Dr. T. S. Palmer, of Washington, the Vice-President of the National Association of Audubon Societies, visited a number of the large millinery stores of the city and called attention to the provisions of the Audubon Law, enacted some time ago, to the effect that it was illegal to sell the feathers of the Egrets. He gave the merchants until four o'clock in the afternoon to remove their stock from exhibition and sale."

"Judging from the accounts in the Denver papers, it is easy to see that there was great activity in the plumage trade that afternoon, as it is said that some of the milliners immediately sent word to their patrons that egrette plumes could be had at a great reduction, if purchased before the fatal hour of four."

[Why cannot a law which could have this effect be passed in England? To argue, as is argued, that it would be useless unless France, etc., agreed to do the same, is immoral. If two members of a family are addicted to drunkenness, one of them might just as well plead that he would *like* to become a total

abstainer, but as long as his brother refused to do so, he would not either! If he gave up the drink, perhaps his brother might' too. If England set the example, France, etc., might follow it. At any rate England would have removed the stigma, and would have done her best. The plumage trade in London is a disgrace to the civilized world! EDITOR.]

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#### THE MOULT OF THE BLACK REDSTART.

SIR,—Mr. Teschemaker in his last letter has now made clear a point which before was not obvious, at any rate to me, that what he meant by what he called the eclipse plumage was merely the first winter plumage. Of course, whether this plumage is analogous to the usually accepted idea of an eclipse plumage in other birds opens up too large a field to discuss here.

The possibility of some individuals of a species having a spring moult and others not has occurred to many ornithologists who have studied the question. But the longer one studies it the more one is struck by the fact that *in the wild state* every individual is *not* a law unto itself but follows the rule of "moult or no moult" to a remarkably constant degree. (I do not say that individuals do not vary slightly amongst themselves as to the *exact* amount).

Many birds in captivity moult peculiarly and irregularly, and because an odd Black Redstart or two change a few feathers in spring *in captivity* I should hesitate a good deal before saying that this species has a spring moult. It is interesting to hear that Bechstein long ago had already determined how long the male of this species takes to attain fully adult plumage, (subsequent authorities seem either not to have accepted this or have overlooked it) but Mr. Teschemaker does not tell us whether this was worked out on captivity birds or not; but seeing that Mr. Teschemaker and Mr. Galloway from the study of captivity birds do not seem to have come to the same conclusion, I am afraid that this "particular brick" in the "stately edifice of Ornithology," which I hoped might be added by aviculturists, is an insecure one.

In answer to Mr. Galloway's letter, I do not think that the rusty edgings on the secondaries are a certain sexual characteristic, as I have some *females* with *broader* edgings than some males have. As I have pointed out in *British Birds* (Vol. III., p. 397), and as Mr. Galloway partly indicates in his letter, the Common Redstart does *not* attain fully adult plumage until the second autumn moult.

Finally I should like to again protest against the use of such ugly and lazy abbreviations as "Blackstart," "Start" and "Gale"—their use seems to be confined to some aviculturists—we shall hear of "Lesser'throat" and "Pied'tail" next!

CLAUD B. TICEHURST.

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#### ABBREVIATIONS AND MISNOMERS.

Because many people nowadays murder the English language by snipping off the beginnings or the ends of words, that is no reason why we aviculturists

should not strive to maintain the names of our favourite birds intact : especially as some of these offensive abbreviations have originated amongst men who have not exactly received a University education, to put it mildly !

In advertisements of birds too, one often reads names which have plainly been invented by dealers, simply because they are ignorant of the original ones ; are we to adopt them because amongst a certain class they may become “ popular ? ”

It is bad enough to hear people ask one if one has seen the “ Panto,” meaning *Pantomime*, etc., etc. One feels inclined to say “ I haven’t been to the Zoo lately, I suppose a Panto is some new animal there.”

And, also, if birds are to have their names clipped, why not people ? *Montgomery* might as well become “ *Gomery* ” ; and no doubt one will soon hear of “ *The Bis* ” instead of the *Ibis*, the “ *Raffe* ” in lieu of the *Giraffe*, etc. Once begin, there is no reason and no rule for stopping.

Two ladies were asked the other day whether they thought the gales were decreasing in England—it was a test question—and they answered, [it was towards the end of March] “ Surely there have been an unusual number this year.” “ But,” was the answer, “ they have not yet arrived.” Their response was a stare of astonishment, and when it was explained that “ *Gales* ” signified “ *Nightingales* ”—*Tableau* !

Shall we talk of “ *Bulls* ” for *Bullfinches* ; “ *Chaffs* ” for *Chaffinches*, etc., etc. ? Why not ? Such abbreviations as are apparently in vogue amongst bird-catchers and the like, are not merely incorrect ; they are worse ; they are “ common.”

H.D.A.

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#### NOTES FROM GIBRALTAR.

Miss CICELY DORRIEN-SMITH, writing in May from Gibraltar, says :—  
 “ There are lots of birds here and they are so nice and tame, as they are protected, and sing all day. There are plenty of *Blue Thrushes*. When I was sketching on the Mediterranean side of the Rock, there was one about thirty yards from me, sitting on a stone and singing away for all he was worth, for a long time. I also saw two on an old wall, both singing hard, with their body feathers all puffed out. Another day, I saw a dozen, or more.

There are two *Peregrine*’s nests on the Rock, one on the east, the other on the west side.

I also saw two *Ospreys* one day, and a *Black Chat*. They say there are a good many of the latter about.

I went over to the Spanish mainland one afternoon, and there the *Nightingales* were singing everywhere, and I also saw a beautiful male *Golden Oriole*, as well as *Kites*, *Eagles*, and *Vultures*.”

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## OAK-APPLE GRUBS FOR BLACK COCKATOOS.

At Woburn Abbey, Lord Tavistock has found that Banksian Cockatoos thrive on oak-apple grubs, when obtainable. Two of these rare birds, which were apparently hopelessly ill, were pulled round after a diet of the grubs.

Lord Tavistock regrets that he did not make this discovery sooner, as he feels sure that he could by this means have saved a tame cock Banksian, "the most interesting and charming creature I ever had," as it was not nearly so ill as the hens when they were first taken in hand, but just wasted slowly away through refusing food, while suffering from nothing more serious than a mild internal inflammation.

\* \* \*

## YOUNG BARNARD PARRAKEETS.

Lord Tavistock writes (May)—"I am rather anxious about my first brood of young Barnards, which are about three parts grown. Their mother has left them completely in their father's charge, and has started sitting again close by." (The Parrakeets live in a semi-wild state in the gardens and park of Woburn Abbey). "It would be all right if the Cock Barnard had not got another wife with young ones about half-a-mile away from the first, but as things are I am very much afraid he will neglect one of his three establishments. Two were quite enough for him to look after."

## RARE SUNBIRDS.

Mr. E. J. Brook writes from Hoddam Castle (14th May).—"I have just received some South African Sunbirds in very fair condition. There are at least three rarities and perhaps more, for some are in immature plumage I think. Possibly they are the same species as those that are in full colour, but I hope and think that some are different."

"All my Indian Sunbirds are splendid, nothing ever seems to ail them. The hens would nest, I think, but I cannot spare a whole compartment for a pair, and when one starts on a nest, others pull it to bits and try to build for themselves with the pieces."

"Sunbirds are mischievous and quarrelsome, but beautiful and easy to keep if properly imported. I am convinced that many rare Lories, Sunbirds, Honeyeaters, etc. could be imported quite easily if people would realize that there are other liquid foods besides milk. Horlick's Malted Milk can be easily obtained and is a safe food and not likely to set up liver disease."

## THE EMU.

We are informed that Messrs. WITHERBY & Co., 326 High Holborn, W.C. have been appointed European Agents for *The Emu*, the organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union, so that those members who are interested in Australian birds will now have no difficulty in obtaining this journal in London.

NEW MEMBERS.

- The LORD WILLIAM PERCY, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick.  
Mrs. W. BURDON, Hartford House, Bedlington, Northumberland.  
Mr. REGINALD WAUD, Hoe Benham, near Newbury.  
Mrs. EDWARD COOKE-HURLE, Northerwood Farm, Lyndhurst, Hants.  
Mrs. CARLETON LOGAN, Roydon, Lymington, Hants.  
Mrs. SIBAG-MONTEFIORE, 2, Palace Houses, W.

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION.

- Mr. HENRY W. LEWIS, Superintendent Memphis Zoo., Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.A. *Proposed by Mr. C. LOVETT.*  
Mr. L. BARLOW-MASSICKS, The Mount, Rotherham; and  
Mr. ALFRED A. THORN, The Citadel, Weston, near Shrewsbury; and  
THE CURATOR, The Reference Library, Piccadilly, Manchester. *Proposed by Mr. R. I. POCKOCK.*  
RICHARDSON CARR, Esq., Home Farm, Tring, Herts. *Proposed by Miss ALDERSON.*

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

- Mrs. E. WARREN-VERNON to Lamancha House, Lamancha, Peebleshire.

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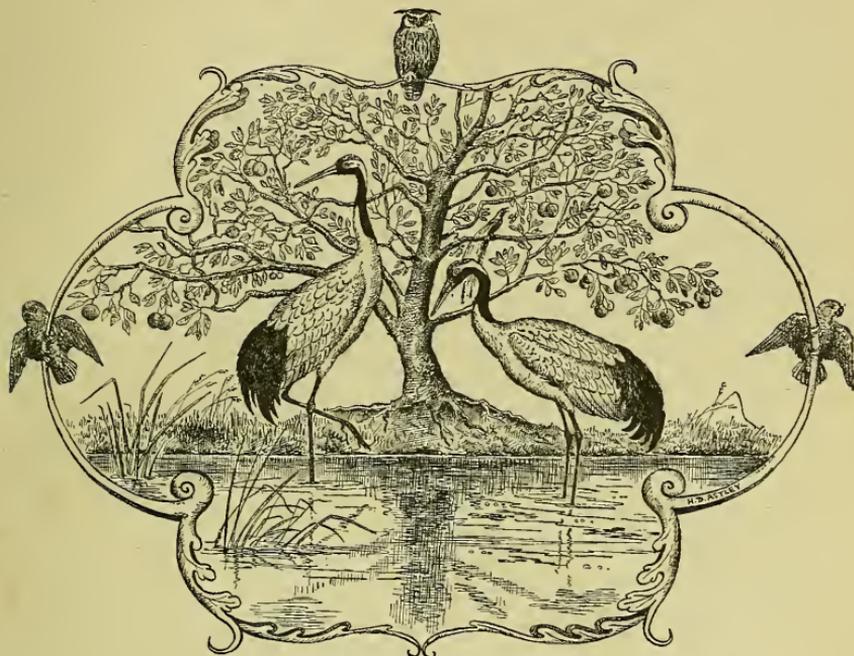
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THIRD SERIES

Vol. IV. No. 9.

The price of this

number is **1/3.**

JULY,

1913

NOTE.—A new volume commences every November.

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## AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

Persons wishing to join the AVICULTURAL SOCIETY are requested to communicate with either of the Hon. Secretaries or the Editor.

The Magazine can also be had from the Publishers by **NON-MEMBERS** at a Subscription of 15/- per annum.

### NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 10/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year, and is payable in advance. The entrance fee is 10/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to members monthly. Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year, on the payment of entrance fee and subscription.

All MSS. for publication in the Magazine, Books for Review, and Private Advertisements should be addressed to the Editor, Mr. HUBERT D. ASTLEY, Benham Valence, Newbury.

All Queries respecting Birds (except *post mortem* cases) should be addressed to the Honorary Correspondence Secretary, Dr. A. G. BUTLER, 124, Beckenham Road, Beckenham, Kent.

All other correspondence, should be sent to the Honorary Business Secretary, Mr. R. I. POCKOCK; Zoological Society's Gardens, Regent's Park, London, N.W. Any change of address should at once be notified to him.

Dead Birds for *post mortem* examination should be sent to Prof. G. H. WOOLDRIDGE, Zoological Society, Regent's Park, N.W.

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THE CHESTNUT-BELLIED BLUE ROCK THRUSH ♂ & ♀.  
*Petrocincla erythrogastra.*

*From living birds in M<sup>r</sup> Hubert D. Astley's possession.*

THE

## AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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JULY, 1913.  


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THE CHESTNUT-BELLIED BLUE ROCK  
THRUSH.*Petrocincla erythrogastra.*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

Of this fine Rock Thrush, Gould (*Birds of Asia*, Vol. III.) writes:—"Every particular relating to the history and economy of this species of Rock-Thrush appears to be as much unknown or buried in obscurity as it was when I published my *Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains* thirty-three years ago." Even Mr. Jerdon merely states that this Thrush has hitherto, he believed, only been found in the Himalayas, generally at a considerable elevation. It is not rare about Darjeeling, and is found on the Khasia Hills.

In June, 1912, Mr. Frost brought over two pairs, one of which came into my possession, the other going to the London Zoological Gardens.

My birds are, as I write, in full beauty in a large outdoor aviary, where they underwent a *complete* vernal moult, beginning in March. The female is now darker than she is depicted in the coloured plate, the original of which was painted in February.

In an aviary these birds seem quite peaceable, but are fond of sitting in dark corners, on the top of some log close to the roof, etc. The male displays to his mate sometimes, puffing out his body feathers and uttering tones of a metallic sound.

His song is not unlike that of the European Blue Rock Thrush.

They are birds which, I think, would as cage pets, become

very tame, after the manner of their kind; but in an aviary they are somewhat shy; but *only* 'somewhat.'

I have not had these extremely handsome Rock Thrushes in my possession long enough to be able to write much about them; as far as nesting goes, the hen was seen carrying hay about in May, but she was not very serious over it, and if all is well we hope for another year to bring more definite results in this direction.

Of course these Rock Thrushes are not *true* Thrushes, as are the species *Turdus* (represented by our Song Thrush) and *Merula* (e.g. the Blackbird) and *Geocichla*—the so-called Ground Thrushes, of which the Orange-headed Ground Thrush is an example. The Rock-Thrushes are nearer to the Chats and Redstarts: indeed the European Rock Thrush (*P. saxatilis*) much resembles, in his movements, a large Redstart, quivering the tail in exactly the same manner. The Italians call him 'Codirossone,' which signifies the Great Red-tail, in distinction to 'Codirosso,' which is the Common Red-start; the termination 'oně' meaning something large.

Major Perreau brought a pair (?) of the Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush to England in March, and Mr. Frost (in Major Horsbrugh's collection) also imported one or two.

These Rock Thrushes, if kept in a cage, need exercise, a daily bath, and a good insectivorous food, with fruit mixed in it, and fresh insects. In this way, I kept a European Blue Rock Thrush for thirteen years. I believe that my birds, and the pair that went to the London Zoological Gardens were the first to be imported alive, probably to Europe, and certainly into England.

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## SUN-BIRDS.\*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

With the advent of the beautiful Himalayan Yellow-backed Sun-birds (*Ethopyga seheria*) which Major Horsbrugh imported, we aviculturists, now that we have discovered how easily they can be kept, when once acclimatized, look eagerly for the importation of some of the other species of this lovely family.

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\* Mr. A. Ezra is writing for the Magazine on several species which he keeps successfully.

I hope later on to publish a coloured plate of the above-mentioned species. In the sunlight the crown of the male shines like an emerald, his back and breast like a ruby, his moustaches are sapphires, his upper tail coverts and lower back, topaz with a touch of emerald.

And these Sun-Birds are so fearless and intelligent. They can be trained to come on one's hand in a very short time, where those who are songsters, and many species have very sweet notes, will sit and sing. They are hardy, for so many go to high altitudes, at any rate in the summer time; altitudes ranging from six to seven thousand feet.

*Ethopyga bella* must be an absolute treasure; very tiny, with saffron yellow breast, scarlet back, emerald crown and tail, etc. It is an inhabitant of the Philippine Islands. And as to the Fire-tailed Sun-Bird (*A. ignicauda*) from the Himalayan Mountains, I feel a grudge against Mr. Frost that he did not succeed in bringing some back!

It is rather a larger Sun-Bird, forehead and crown steel violet-blue: back of the head, neck, back, and upper-tail coverts, and two central tail feathers, bright scarlet; lower back, yellow; chin and throat metallic violet, shading into steel blue: under surface of the body, yellow; strongly shaded with scarlet on the centre of the chest. Furthermore the tail is very long, measuring five inches of the bird's total length of eight.

It is very common in the Sikkim, and in the cold weather may be found in the Subhimalayan tracts, e.g. at Kalsi in the Dehran Dhoon.

It is also found in the western hill portion of Assam, etc. At Darjeeling it appears in considerable numbers about April, the males at that time in the process of donning their gorgeous nuptial plumage.

To obtain this species of Sun-Bird only, an expedition would be worth while. They must be perfectly *beautiful!* And so easy to keep. Some bottles of Horlick's Malted Milk, and some jars of Marmite and of honey are sufficient. There need be no failing of food-supply on the voyage, and all one wants is some hot water to mix it with, day by day.

There are a goodly number of members of the species *Ethopyga*, all with longish pointed tails, and mostly shewing scarlet and green and yellow in their plumage. *Ethopyga flavostriata* is a beauty, the bright scarlet chin and throat being strongly streaked with yellow in distinct lines, running downwards from the chin. It inhabits the Celebes.

The Sun-Birds classed under *Cinnyris* have square tails, the Purple Sun-Bird (*C. asiaticus*) being one that has been seen on the show-bench for some time. In the sunshine a very beautiful creature, looking rather like a miniature Rifle-Bird, but the magnificent general colour of deep shot blues, greens, and purples is relieved by the orange yellow pectoral tufts at the shoulders. The Purple Sun-Bird extends far into the Himalayas, and is abundant in Ceylon in the maritime districts and low jungles.

Mr. Holdsworth wrote that at a Government rest-house in the extreme south of the island, a pair of these birds had a nest in the verandah, which was fastened to an iron rod hanging from the roof, once used for suspending a lamp.

The birds showed very little fear, although he was for several days sitting within a few feet of the nest. Mr. Morgan says that it breeds in the Neilgherries up to an elevation of 6000 feet, as well as in the plains.

The song is thought to resemble that of the Chaffinch, but less strong, and more melodious. Others have likened it to that of a Willow-Wren.

In winter it may be seen sporting on the sunny side of lofty trees. As soon as the Sahajna (*Hyperanthera maringa*) begins to blossom, it is constantly seen hovering before the white flowers, and as each forest-tree blossoms, it rifles them of their sweets.

Dr. Jerdon has written that a pair built their nest just outside his house-door at Julna. It was commenced on a thick spiders' web, by attaching to it various fragments of paper, cloth, straw, grass, and other substances, till it had secured a firm hold of the twig to which the spider's web adhered; and the nest suspended on this, was then completed by adding other fragments of the same materials. The entrance was at one side, near the top, and had a slight projecting roof, or awning, over it. The female laid two eggs,

of a greenish-grey tinge with dusky spots. The first nest was accidentally destroyed after the eggs were laid; and the couple immediately commenced building another in a small tree at the other side of the door, and in this instance, as in the last, began operations on a fragment of a spider's web; which is a hint for nesting in an aviary!

Another observer describes the nest as composed of small twigs, pieces of grass and leaves, and lined with thistle-down and silk cotton. It is generally adorned with the excrement of caterpillars, small bits of rag, paper, etc. Mr. Morgan records that a pair which built in front of his office at Kurnool, in an acacia tree, had the most extraordinary nest he had ever seen. It was ornamented with bits of blotting-paper, twine, and old service stamps that had been left lying about. The whole structure was most compactly bound together with cobwebs, and had a long string of caterpillar-excrement wound round it. It breeds from February to June. They have two broods in rapid succession, usually in the same nest. When the female is on the nest, her little head can be seen just peeping out of the hole under the 'awning.'

A nest at Agra was built on a loose piece of thatch-cord in a verandah, and on the side of the nest, stuck on like a signboard, was a piece of a torn-up letter with 'My dear Adam' on it; presumably the little Eve had written it in admiration of her husband with the shining plumage.

The Sun-Birds form part of the large group of Honey-Suckers. The plumage of the males in nearly all instances, differs strongly from that of the females, and is as a rule very brilliant, vying with the colours of the Humming-Birds. No coloured picture can really do them justice on account of the metallic hues which change in great variety according to the light.

Sun-Birds in a wild state feed on minute insects, and suck honey from flowers with their long slender tongues. They do not, like the Humming-Birds, hover in front of flowers to feed, but cling to them.

The range of the family is an extensive one. Africa, Madagascar and the neighbouring islands; Palestine; Southern Asia; Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Philippines, Celebes, New Guinea, North

Australia, and the Papuan and Moluccan Archipelagos. They are not found in Europe, nor yet in the Western Hemisphere.

The species entitled *Hedydipna* is distinguished by a shorter bill, whilst the tail is square with the two centre feathers in the male much elongated, and the ends rounded and slightly widened, and this is also the case in the *Nectarinia*, which species inhabit South, West and North-East Africa.

*Anthobaphes* is another, in which the tail is very strongly graduated, with the two centre feathers narrow and much elongated. The males have pectoral tufts at the shoulders. They are found in Cape Colony and Little Namaqua Land.

If any aviculturists wish for something really lovely, tame, confident, and when acclimatized, easily kept, I can certainly recommend Sun-Birds; but the males are very pugnacious, and will even bully their mates in confined quarters. When let out of their cage, they will flit lightly about, peering here and there in a fearless manner, and if hungry (or rather, thirsty) they will boldly come to a vessel of their liquid food. The long tongue protrudes and dips in, whilst the small throat vibrates as the liquid is sucked down. Unlike Sugar Birds, they do not seem to eat sponge-cake, but will suck all the liquid out of it. On a journey a good plan is to put in the food glass a perfectly clean piece of sponge, which should be scalded in boiling water every day. The Sun-Birds will suck the liquid which is prevented from spilling over.

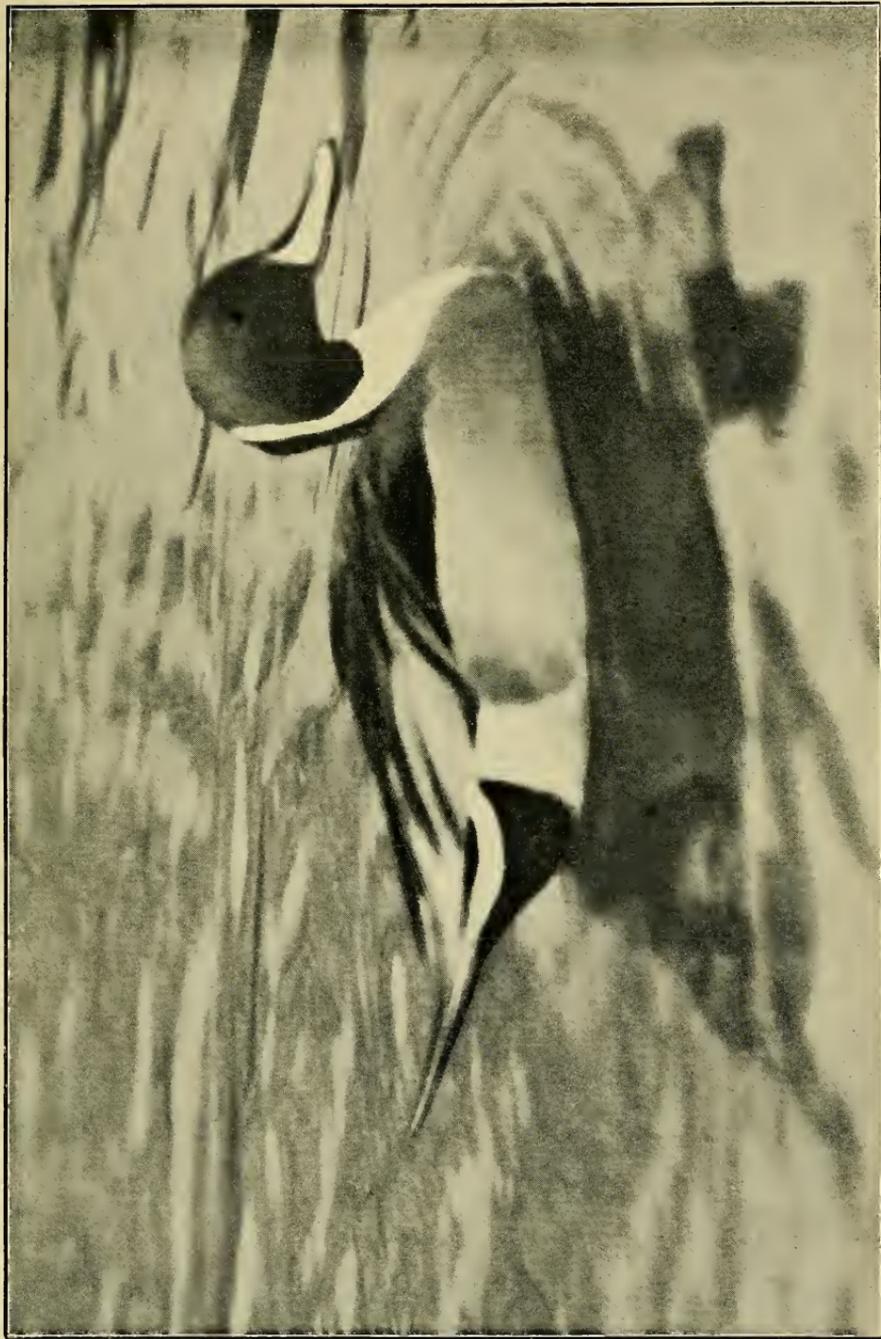
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## STRAY NOTES ON THE KEEPING OF WATERFOWL.

By MAURICE PORTAL.

Probably most of us who are interested in the keeping of Waterfowl of various kinds, fall into the common error of overcrowding our pond or ponds—unless blessed with special facilities for keeping Ducks. If one only looks on one's pond as a source of intense interest in noting the many changes of plumage and colour which a Duck passes through in the twelve months, and noting their various calls and modes of courtship, the over crowding matters less—as



PINTAIL, DRAKE.  
(ON SIR EDWARD GREY'S POND AT FALLODEN.)

Photo by Maurice Portal.



provided ample green food (such as cabbage in winter and lettuces or lawn mown grass in summer) is given, together with sufficient corn and gravel and grit and old lime is provided, the birds will thrive well enough as long as the water is fresh. On the other hand, if one wants nests, then the trouble begins.

Duck will not court and nest freely if they have a crowded water area, even though the surroundings may be good for nesting purposes. I have noted that nothing puts a pair off courtship more than being worried by other birds. Again, in Spring time some species are much more pugnacious than others and trouble is often caused by a male driving all other birds away from the water near where his mate is thinking of nesting even. I am convinced that prolonged fighting and disturbance, means eggs dropped in the water and no nest.

If the facilities exist for it, I would prefer to pen up birds of a species and give ample nesting room, even though a smaller water area were given during the nesting season.

It would appear that to ensure success in getting one's ducks to lay, three things are necessary.

1. To have hand-reared stock.
2. Not too many birds on the water.
3. Avoid looking too often to see if they *are* nesting.

This last is one of the hardest things to avoid doing—and it is really needless, as if the ducks are carefully observed early in the morning, it will be found that most of them lay between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m., and by watching the water, you see what females are off and probably see from what direction they come back on; where you see a female come on and be at once joined by her mate, you may be sure she is laying.

If you later miss her off the water during the day, it is fair to assume she has started to sit, and one can then look for and take the nest if desired.

There is no accounting for the tastes of Ducks—some sites are always in request for nests, others, which look to the human eye better or identical, are never looked at. This year a Mandarin laid in one of five boxes, all identical and three of which faced the same

way. A Gadwall turned her out and pushed eggs to one side and laid eight eggs, which I took. Two days later a Tufted was in and now I note another Mandarin goes in too.

Moorhens should never be allowed on a pond where any rarer sorts of Waterfowl are kept, they not only suck the eggs, but will also kill small ducks when hatched. Last year a Moorhen sucked a Baikal Teal's nest for me and was shot with the air gun as it finished an egg. On opening the bird, egg, etc., was visible, so no possible doubt exists. I am told the Australian Water Rail is rather worse.

In the rearing of young ducks of Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall, Shoveller, Mandarin, Tufted, Chiloe, etc., I find duck weed and a few ants' eggs (dried ones or fresh) of the greatest use, combined with duck meal and fine egg. If young birds will not take on to feed, I have found scalded Vermicelli, hung in strips on blades of grass, or dropped on backs of ducklings to be a means of getting them to feed. Probably the man who tries most little dodges, is the most successful rearer of birds who are slow to start feeding.

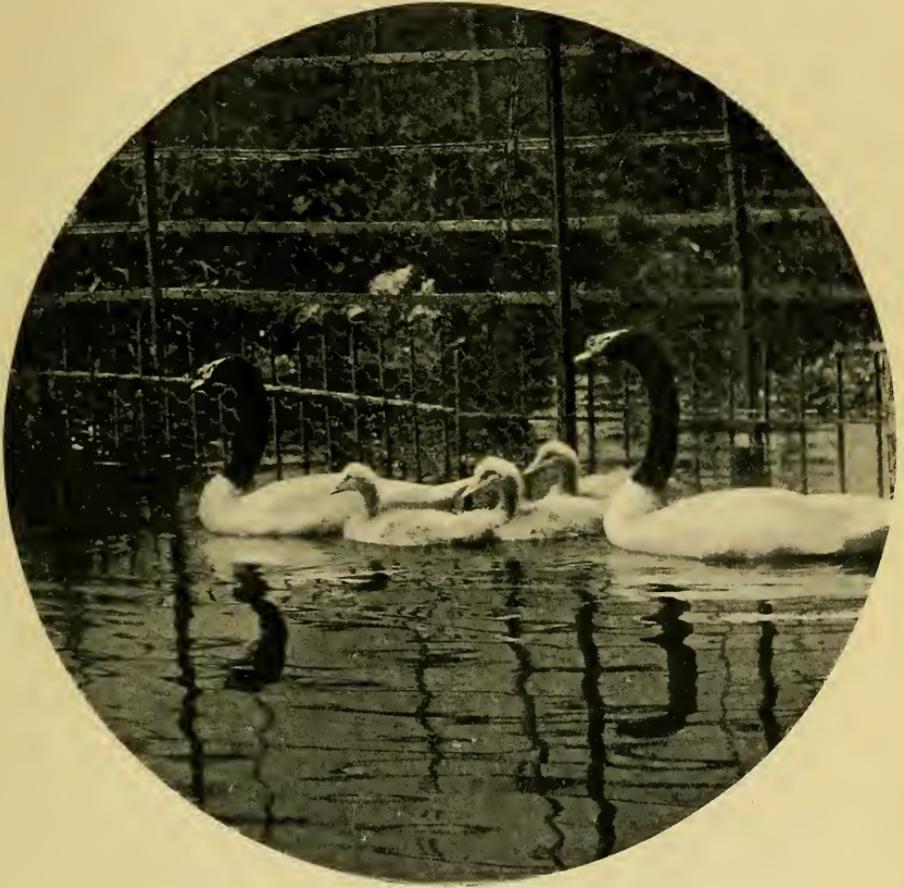
Shell Ducks seem to thrive best on a good many worms or strips of fish, as well as duck meal. Small chopped worms I have found excellent too, and if placed in the water in shallow dishes or tin lids, often help to bring on backward ducks.

Much can be done to increase the numbers of the more uncommon nesting Ducks in England, such as Gadwall, Tufted, Wigeon, Teal, by putting one's surplus young birds, in September, on suitable ponds or lakes, with the feathers of one wing cut; they will not be able to fly until the following July-August, or thereabouts, so will probably have nested—or if a species which does not breed the first year, then at any rate, they will have become used to the place and probably stop about—and breed next season.

Wild fowl are decreasing all over the world and it behoves us all to do our best to help to maintain a good stock in England.

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BLACK-NECKED SWANS AND BROOD  
AT BENHAM VALENCE.





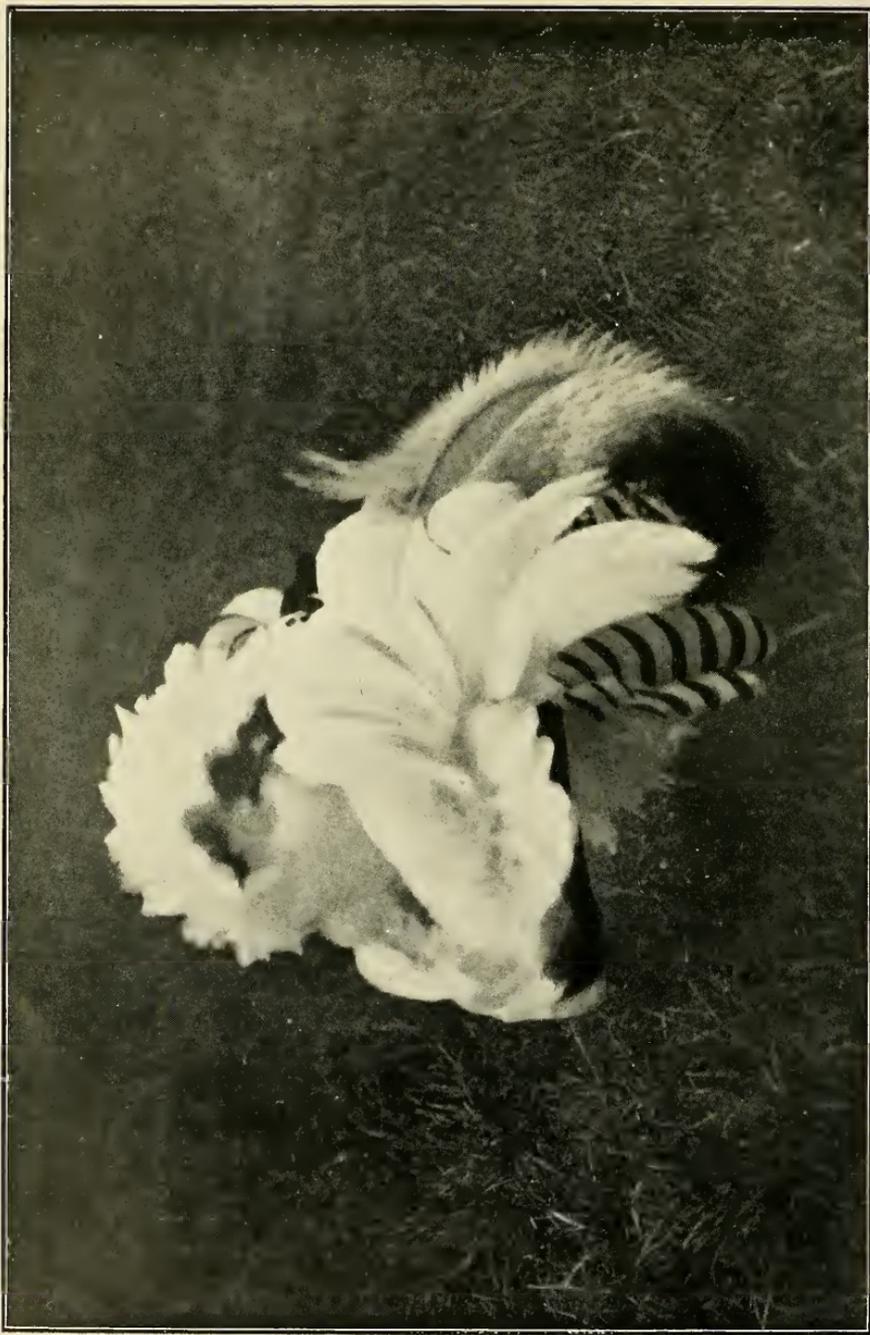


Photo by W. H. St. Quintin.

DISPLAY OF COCK GREAT BUSTARD.

## THE GREAT BUSTARD.

By A. TREVOR-BATTYE, M.A.

At the Editor's request for something about the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) I gladly offer this little general account. (I remember that the practical side has already been covered in the Magazine, notably by letters from Mr. St. Quintin). One of the pictures which these remarks accompany will be interesting to those who have not had an opportunity of seeing a bird of this species on the nest. Mr. Hubert Astley took the photograph in an enclosed orchard at Benham Valence. This individual was a Spanish bird; she came from a nest on, I think, the Isla Major below Coria del Rio on the Guadalquivir, and was brought up, with others that reached me at the same time, in a little back yard of a cottage in that village.

The other photograph shows the astonishing transformation of a male Great Bustard during 'display.' This bird was also for two years in my garden; he was photographed by Mr. St. Quintin.\*

The Great Bustard is found from "Spain to Mesopotamia" (Newton), but its principal centres in Europe are, I think, the Crimea, Turkey, and the Danubian Provinces. It is a bird of extremely powerful flight, although the slow movement of its wings is deceptive and gives no idea whatever of its swift progression, misleading at first even a practised partridge-driving shot.

In Andalusia, the Great Bustard is shot by the following method. Late in February or early in March, when the birds are in the waving green corn, guns and drivers start out on horses. On Bustards being sighted perhaps a long way off—for males when in full display are as conspicuous as marble monuments—the horses string out, a driver keeping with each gun. When the direction of the wind and the lie of the ground have determined the line of ambush, each gun in turn slips off his horse (on the side away from the Bustards) and drops into the corn or other cover. His companion leads along the horse, and the Bustards, who keep their gaze on the moving horses, do not notice the ruse. When all the guns are favourably placed, the drivers ride out and round so as to get behind the birds.

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[\* Did Mr. St. Quinton photograph a lady's hat by mistake?]

Then they advance, and finally work the birds over the guns as in partridge-driving.

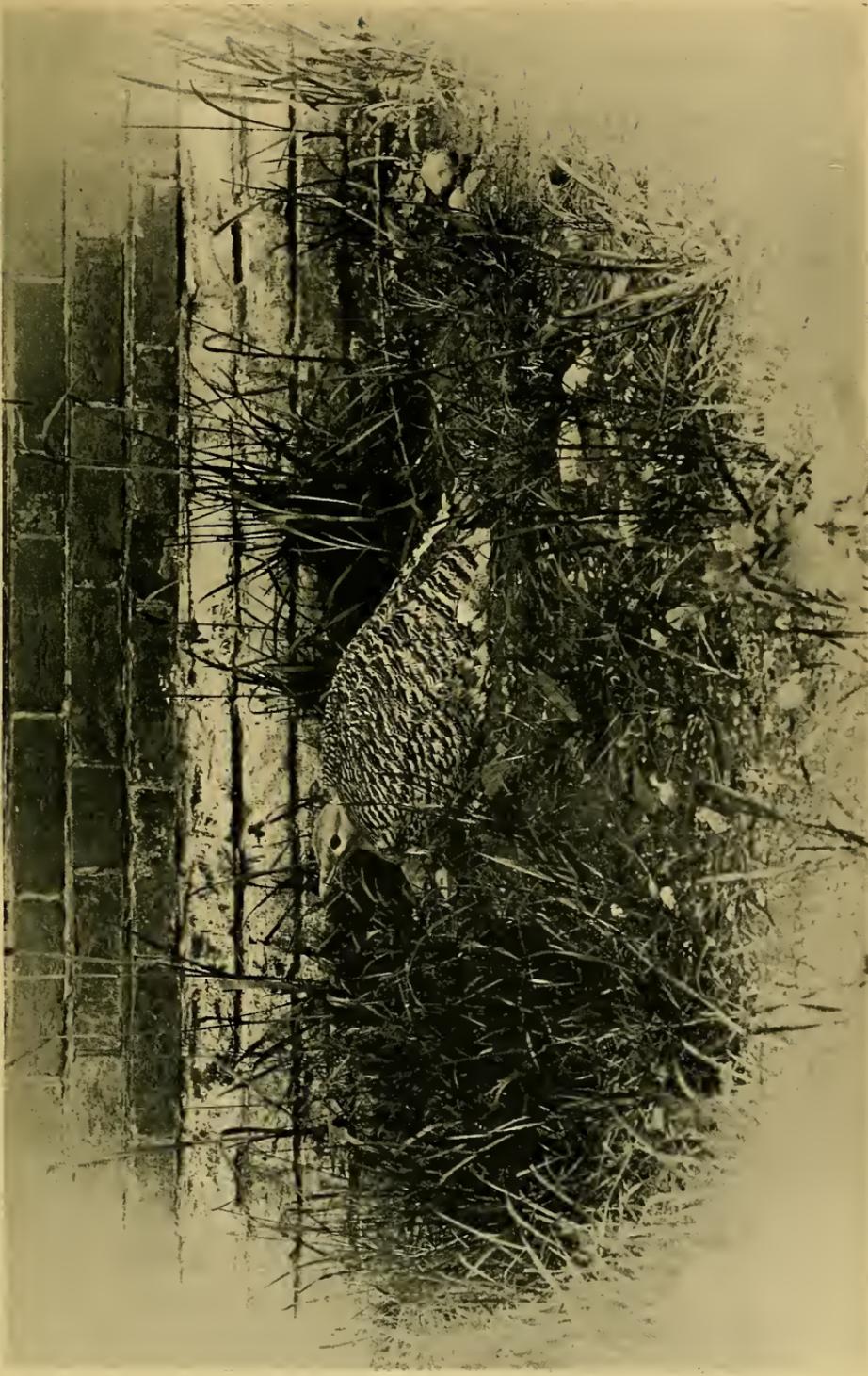
A male bird shot thus in full flight comes to the ground with a considerable shock ; for though 27 lbs. is the weight of the heaviest Great Bustard we have personally seen shot, they are said to reach as great a weight as 38 lbs. (Newton). In Spain the wild bird does not live only upon crops and wild herbage but on much animal food such as lizards, insects and mice.

It is not a little curious that the males should 'display' long before the coming of the females, which are said not to arrive before April. These birds in captivity make four distinct noises, viz., a rough bark or "honk" made habitually when scared, a deep guttural "laugh" when visited in their paddock and not afraid, a deep sound like a "stopped" note on a base viol, made by the male when in full display, and a kind of whine, only heard, in my experience, when their feeder leaves their paddock ; then they call after him with this particular cry. They are interesting birds to keep, though always rather an anxiety because of their liability to panic : yet in Mr. Walter Buck's lovely garden at Jerez de la Frontera, where they are quite at liberty, they are so bold that they dispute possession of food with two huge mastiffs.

The Great Bustard has a particular interest for us, as once a British bird—one indeed that just managed to retain its place in Norfolk up to some 75 years ago, within the possible memory of many an old man living yet. But in the beginning of the last century there were groups of these birds, not only in Norfolk, but in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Suffolk and Wiltshire, though they seem to have disappeared by that time from Dorset, Hants and Cambridgeshire, where they were formerly known. They frequented large open spaces—the plains, heaths and wide corn-lands. It would have been in any case impossible for so shy and so conspicuous a bird to survive the pressure of the increasing population about its narrowing borders, but, to begin with, the extension of plantations robbed it of its sense of security, and then the invention of the corn-drill and horse-hoe sealed its fate (Stevenson), for the use of these implements inevitably led to the discovery and destruction of its nests.\*

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\*The same thing is apparently happening in the case of the Corncrake, owing to the hay-cutting machines. ED.



FEMALE GREAT BUSTARD (INCUBATING HER TWO EGGS), BENHAM VALENCE.



A solitary Great Bustard, reported from Norfolk two or three years ago, was believed to be the sole surviving remnant of a company of seventeen (?) birds turned out by Lord Walsingham some few years before.

The re-establishment of this noble bird in its old haunts in England has been a dream with many who regret its loss, and some attempts have been made in this direction, but each time with disappointing results. In the opinion of the present writer no efforts—on however large a scale—are likely to meet with success. Those adverse agencies which acted before would act again, only “more so,” and this applies to the birds whether pinioned or full-winged. Take the most naturally favourable of their old haunts left—take Salisbury Plain. Consider the ease with which a male bird in display could be there detected, and across how great a distance! Think of the foes to pinioned birds—of foxes, dogs, men! Even if by any chance a hen did save her nest, could she ever hope to bring up her young against such odds? If, on the other hand, the experiment were made with full-winged birds, each would quickly be shot in one part or another of the country. (We know what happened when the wise men of Gotham tried to keep their Cuckoo in the tree!)

It is to be hoped that any landowner who may contemplate again liberating Great Bustards will not sacrifice such noble birds in this way, for the experiment is foredoomed to failure, but instead will set about making “pheasantries” for them on a large scale: for the best we can now hope is that some one may have the good fortune to hatch and rear the Great Bustard in a semi-domesticated state.

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## THE FINDING OF A TREASURE.

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

Over half-a-century ago—we were at lunch one day when “Jones” was announced; and in he came with that look of pent-up importance which betokens the man who has something to say and won't be happy until he has said it; and scarcely waiting until he had taken a seat, he burst forth, addressing an elder brother of mine,—“I've just been over at Innes' farm, and he says there's a

hawk's nest in the Nether Wood and the old birds are taking his chickens."

A stranger listening to the conversation that followed, in which my brother and his quondam chum took a leading part, would have assumed that the latter was an old and experienced falconer who knew all about falcons and falconry that there was to be known—and a good deal more besides. As a matter of fact, he had never possessed a hawk in his life—I doubt if he had ever kept so much as a canary. It was I who had the birds (hawks, jays, magpies, &c.) and had inspired the hawking mania in his breast; and, chancing to come upon a book on falconry, he had so worked himself up into a fever that he was instant on the subject—*sometimes* in season but more often very much out of it; the attack while it lasted was acute, but happily for others it was short-lived.

While the chums chattered, I sat still without saying a word; indeed, the two grown-ups were far too superior to recognise my existence. A much sat-upon younger son, I had become reserved and silent: and I listened to their vapourings with contempt—I fear I seldom was so pleased as when I saw them floundering helplessly in some Natural History quagmire. I had kept birds and beasts ever since I could toddle, and, at the time we are writing about, flattered myself that I was acquainted with every nest of importance anywhere in the neighbourhood; nevertheless I was now brought face to face with the ugly fact that there was a hawk's nest in the Nether Wood, little more than half-a-mile away, and I knew not of it whilst others did. I felt that such a circumstance was a serious reflection on my character,—though why this should have been is not quite clear.

The Nether Wood occupied the whole of one side of a rather deep valley, running along the hillside for a mile or so, but was comparatively narrow. It was mostly an oak wood, which had been thinned out a few years previously, with a luxuriant undergrowth of hazel bushes. At one end, however, in the top right corner, the oaks gave way to some thick tall trees of the beech species; and, just outside, there was a little hamlet; never having found a nest of interest near the hamlet, I had not searched this part of the wood, and therefore concluded that the nest spoken of

by "Jones" must be among the beeches. Thus it came about that, as soon as the two tattlers thought proper to bestir their nether extremities in addition to that other little member which wagged ceaselessly, I led them (for to have gone without me never entered their heads) straight to this corner, and, in but a few minutes, had spotted the nest, chucked off my coat, and was gliding up the beech as agilely and silently as a monkey with an eye on a sleeping bird, leaving my two inconsequent companions chattering away upon any and every subject but the one which had brought us to the place.

On getting clear of the hazel bushes, I paused for a moment to inspect—and there fell on my ears a sound which sent a thrilling tingle through my whole system. I had believed that there was not a wild bird about our parts whose voice I could not distinguish; nay, I could tell what each call meant. I had thought that the nest aloft was a Kestrel's, but the voice which now floated up from the valley below was no Kestrel's voice—it was something new!!! It was a ventriloquial cry, for although it sounded as if far away it came from the lower edge of the wood only some two hundred yards off, and from birds on the wing which were flying backwards and forwards but out of sight. Quivering with excitement, I resumed my climb as stealthily as possible, for the season was getting on and young hawks ought to be strong on the wing; and I was soon close under the nest, which was high up in the tree; taking a firm hold with my left hand, and with my right free and ready to make a pounce should the inmates be stampeded by my appearance, I slowly drew myself up until I could see into it. This caution was not needed, however, for the three nestlings were but a few days old; so I speedily descended, and, hustling my loquacious elders away from the spot, and keeping them temporarily quiet with uplifted finger and a *hus-s-sh*, I asked them, when at a safe distance, whether they had heard "the birds." I need not have asked the question; of course they had not—had not heard anything but the sound of their own sweet voices; a strange bird? what a comical idea! had I a tile loose in the upper storey? surely much bird-nesting had made me crazy. *It was a common Kestrel's nest*: did not he "Jones," say it? so what was the good of arguing! With thoughts of unutterable

contempt, I withdrew into my shell.—Before separating, we agreed to come back in a few days' time.

On more than one occasion, I had taken say a couple of youngsters from a nest, and, a little later, had compared my "bringings up" with those which had been left behind. I had tried this with Kestrels and had found that, however much care I might bestow on the little ones, the parents could beat me hollow in the rearing of young birds. It is not solely a matter of food, but there are also the tender nursing and the gentle warmth of the parent-birds brooding over their offspring which can only be feebly imitated by man; and, bearing this in mind, I knew it would be a mistake to take the young hawks at so early a date as that decided upon—but farmer Innes had to be reckoned with! These sturdy old-fashioned farmers of long ago, notwithstanding their out-of-date methods of farming, were splendid fellows of untold value to the nation, and they had their own little way of dealing with hawks' nests when chickens went too fast. As soon as they could spare the time, taking up their double-barrelled muzzle-loader from its corner (a novel weapon with Innes, who still had an old flint-lock in serviceable condition), they would lie in wait at the foot of the tree if necessary for hours; sooner or later an old bird would venture to return, one barrel directed with a certain aim would bring it to the ground, the other would be fired into the bottom of the nest, and off our friend would go feeling that he had done his duty—by his chickens. I remember examining a Kestrel's nest which had been thus treated. One well-feathered nestling had been hit with that second barrel, and the survivors had fallen upon it tooth and nail and had left practically nothing but the frame, the large feathers and the head—usually the first part attacked, but it had proved an over-hard nut for them to crack. They were so ravenous that, presumably the other parent had been too panic-stricken to return to the nest.

The appointed day found the three of us once more at the tree, and I was quickly among the branches. On this occasion the old birds were bolder, and with wild cries were sweeping around; and they made bold and threatening swoops in my direction as I neared the nest. The sky was bright and clear, but I could not see

any colours—only two dark silhouetted forms, with very long sharply-pointed almost Swift-shaped wings, dashing through and cleaving the air in a manner no Kestrel could ever approach. To my trained eye, the flight and shape of the bird on the wing were absolutely different from those of the Kestrel: to my trained ear, the cry likewise was absolutely different and distinct. They were not Kestrels—that was *pat*; they were not Sparrow-Hawks—that was certain; Merlins did not come our way and never (so I then thought) nested in trees: then, *what could they be?* In a few minutes, the three white balls of down were in my cap, the cap was in my mouth, and I had descended and was displaying my treasures to the unbelievers below. Yes, they had seen and heard the hawks—just common Kestrels; but the cry?—just the well-known cry of the Kestrel, which any body who knew anything about hawks would recognise in a moment; I pointed to the moustache (cheek-stripe), the shades of which were beginning to appear—exactly as in the young Kestrel! Oh, the indescribable vanity and conceit of the ignorant! Surely they know more than all the rest of the world put together. And they are *so* happy in their own superlative emptiness; he would be a churl indeed who would grudge them their length of ear! On reaching home and examining the new arrivals quietly by myself, I found that some of the quills were beginning to burst forth and were dark like those of the Peregrine:—*Kestrels* indeed!!!

A day or two later, “Jones” called to enquire how the young “Kestrels” were getting on; and how he jeered and mocked and scoffed, before other members of the family, at my obstinacy in maintaining that the new birds were *not* Kestrels! Like so many of his calibre, including a great number of the “softer” sex, to differ from their dictum is regarded as a personal affront; he had been nursing his dignity ever since our last meeting, and now was mad angry at my total disregard of his opinion. Was he not “Jones” of Brazenose, who had got him a name at Oxford for pulling a good oar, and I but a beardless youth? And the conceit of these people is such, that the possibility of others not being of their way of thinking never occurs to them:—and so the poor man allowed his feelings to carry him a *little* too far; and great was the shock to his self-esteem when my tall father, who had been reading or pretending

to, abruptly rose from his seat with a look on his face that there was no mistaking, and which caused the inane laugh of superior wisdom to fizzle out in a sickly giggle. Having too much old-fashioned courtesy to attack a visitor (the son of an old friend, too) under his own roof; the old man, at one time a keen sportsman, field naturalist, &c., and who knew our British birds right well, not trusting himself to speak, for he was impatient of folly, took out a book, turned over a few leaves, and, laying it on a table before "Jones" tapping the page almost menacingly, pointed to—

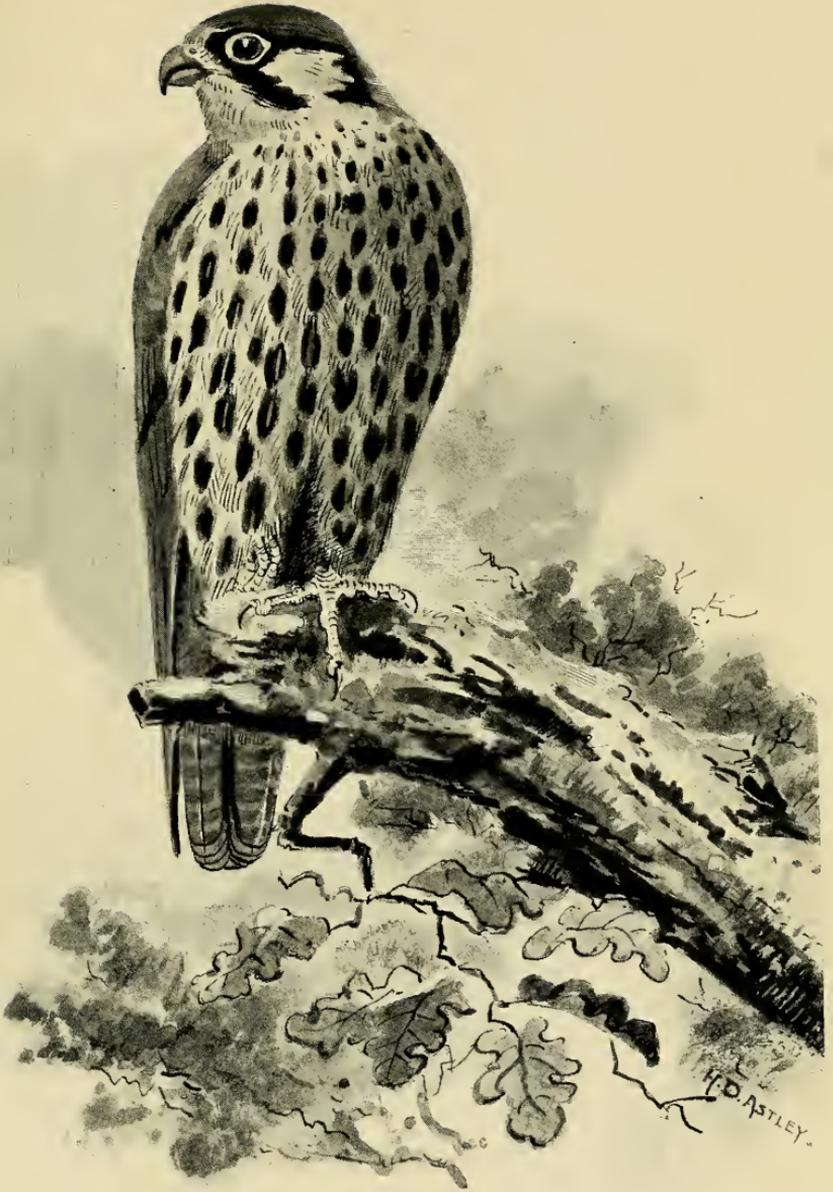
### THE HOBBY.

#### *Falco subbuteo.*

Some little time after this, "Jones" arrived one day with a military friend who genuinely went in for falconry, and who brought a trained Goshawk for us to look at. This gentleman, hearing of the Hobbies, had expressed a great desire to see them; he said that, if he had been in my place, he would have erected a booth (of branches) near the nest and would have stayed in it for a week in order to watch and note the habits of the species. He gave me the address of Lord Somebody's falconer, who, for half-a-crown, sent me a hood for a Hobby: but the hood was too small even for a male: so it would seem that the practical man, accustomed to handle Peregrines, Goshawks, and perhaps even Gyrs, had no real knowledge of this rare little falcon.

In the following summer, I found a second nest, this time in an exceptionally thick forcing oak-wood almost ready for the forester and quite on the flat. In this, again, there were just three nestlings.

During the third summer, the last before I was turned out of the home-nest to fly—or otherwise, I found a Hobby's nest (perhaps there was but one pair) in a much larger oak-wood, which covered a hill of considerable size. The oak in which the nest had been built was just about in the centre of a wide bend or bay in the side of the hill, and commanded a magnificent view of the open country below, an ideal position for a falcon's eyrie. But, here, an ill-omened silence overshadowed the place. In vain I looked for those swooping forms; in vain I listened if I might hear but the faintest whisper of those well-beloved cries—all was silent as the grave. Certain



THE HOBBY  
(*Falco subbuteo*).



marks on the tree shewed that some one had been up there before me; and, on finding one young bird in the nest, I felt that it was one more than I might have hoped for: probably it had been left temporarily on the chance that a shot might be had at the surviving parent; for there was a large farm-house in the front, not very far away, with chickens galore. It was nearly fully feathered, but had been over-exposed, for it had a vocal defect in its call, which experience had already taught me meant death; and in course of time it sickened and died in the manner described below.

In each of these three cases, the nest was Crow-like: in fact, doubtless each was that of a Carrion Crow in which young had been reared earlier in the year; for the Hobby is a late breeder, not laying its eggs until June.

In no case did I see the egg. Howard Saunders says,—“The eggs, usually 3 in England, but up to 5 in number on the Continent, are often yellowish-white, closely freckled with rufous, and can then be easily distinguished from those of the Kestrel; but sometimes they are suffused with reddish-brown and are therefore not so recognizable.”

Doubtless, in England at any rate, this species has but one brood in the year.

The Hobby is a summer visitor to this country; and, whatever the adults may be, the young are not robust. I used to keep my hawks loose in a large loft, with netting over the “window,” and, on fine days, would place any nestlings I might have in a basket, which I suspended from a bough in a quiet unfrequented part of the shrubbery, with the result that, as they grew to be branchers, they learned their way about and to know me, my whistle, and my dog. Kestrels and Sparrow-Hawks flourished under this treatment; but I found that if a Hobby, even when well feathered, were exposed to wind, it would have its voice affected, and, when once so touched, would certainly die. For some two months, the crack in the voice would be the only apparent symptom of mischief; but eventually the invalid would become puffy, a greenish discharge would flow from its mouth, and it would die from some bronchial trouble. Thus even in those far-off days I learned that a too free and general application of the fresh-air treatment will leave some

victims in its track: what is one bird's life is another bird's death! However, not in any case did a young Hobby become affected after it had grown sufficiently to fly freely about.

I customarily allowed the Hobbies and Kestrels, and sometimes the less reliable Sparrow-Hawks, with bells on \* (ferret bells), and various other birds, to fly loose during the day; and certainly it was a pretty sight, and a very pleasing experience too, as I chanced any time to be returning home, that there should suddenly appear from various points a number of hawks flying dead at me, each in a bee-line like so many spokes of a wheel, and all bursting into their wildest cries as they neared me, perching on my upraised arm, on my shoulders and head, screaming and fighting over my cap (which I had to take care of), and frolicking and circling around me in reckless delight; and many were the queer stories, not altogether fables, which the country folk had of "Master Reginald" and the birds. One case was certainly a little startling. I was some way from home, and a large flock of Rooks and Jackdaws was passing over homeward-bound, when one of the latter, detaching itself from its comrades, curved backwards and downwards and circled round and round my head uttering friendly caws of recognition, and, settling on the ground only three or four yards away, greeted me with unfeigned pleasure. It was a truant that had given me wing-bail some time previously. Two country fellows near-by looked upon the scene with stern set faces and grave suspicion. In earlier days, I suppose, I should have been subjected to a treatment of bell, book, and candle, and a warm quarter-of-an-hour at the stake. But I am digressing. Towards evening, I had but to sound my whistle, and seldom had trouble in getting my little flock into their loft. I must admit, I fear, that the Hobbies were neither so active and interesting on the wing, so clever in finding their way back to the mews, nor so engaging as pets as were the common and unwisely-despised Kestrels.

I have referred to the Hobby as being a rare species; nevertheless, from later observations, I am inclined to think that it may

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\* The cottagers did not understand the bells, and mistook the tinklings for the voices of the birds. "It is nowght but a Gled"—but they had never heard a Gled make a noise like that. Now a Gled is a Kite; so there must have been a time, not so very far distant in my days, when the species was fairly common.—R.P.

be less uncommon than many suppose. At any rate it seems to favour the neighbourhood of London, for I have noticed it in Hertfordshire, in Kent, and even in meadows adjoining Barnes Common of all places, and not so very many years ago either. Probably if people could learn to distinguish its flight and call, it would be more often recognised; but what hope is there when so many still tell us that the flight of the cuckoo is like that of a hawk (*which hawk?* no two of our small hawks fly alike, *and that it is difficult to distinguish a hawk from a cuckoo.*)

The wild Hobby on the wing is a beautiful sight; its powers of flight are marvellous. On the rare occasions that I have seen a wild Peregrine, so far as flight is concerned, it seemed to be nowhere compared with the Hobby. The latter is not a large bird, but its wings are long and pointed, and, when at rest, extend beyond the tip of the tail. In outward appearance, it is of the Peregrine type and quite different from Kestrel, Merlin, or Sparrow-Hawk. The sexes are much alike, but the female is the larger of the two.

Speaking from memory, for I have no book on the subject to refer to, in olden days the Hobby was used for flying at larks and other small birds, and (I am sure I have heard or read somewhere) is the only falcon that can take a climbing (soaring) Snipe. Personally I never succeeded in doing anything with my Hobbies—but then they were fat, lazy, overfed pets. The would-be falconer must take the matter seriously, and ever have at the back of his mind the Arabic proverb,—“Keep your cat hungry and she will catch the rat.” Few hawks will give real sport except when sharp-set.

I have been told, though I am unable to confirm the statement from my own observations, that, in the wild state, the Hobby feeds largely on insects as well as on small birds. I have never seen it attempt to catch either mouse or vole.

Some 26-7 years ago, I kept hawks, &c., here in London, the collection including a Hobby. In the aviary, although as tame as a kitten, she was somewhat uninteresting. It is the fashion to assert, and to assert dogmatically, that birds of prey, in confinement, do as well in a small as in a large place, or something to that effect. But on this point I differ absolutely: the mistake lies in not providing them with a *sufficiently* large place. My aviary was large enough

for the comparatively short-winged Kestrels, who were as active as cats, the liveliest of the lively, and ever on the look-out for mischief : but the Hobby, a fine powerful female in perfect feather, found no scope for her long wings in a ten-foot-high aviary. Such birds do not naturally hop and walk about ; they are creatures of the air, and need an abundance of space. Certainly this is easier talked of than put into practice—but why put the saddle on the wrong horse ! My London Hobby seemed to be so dis-spirited by her (to her) cramped surroundings that, at feeding time, I often had to shut her up by herself, for other birds, notably the Kestrels, would swoop and snatch away the food, even out of her very beak.

In October, 1898, a really nice pair of Hobbies was exhibited at a Crystal Palace Bird Show. Even to this day I remember the force I had to put upon myself to keep my £4 in my pocket and leave the hawks behind, even although, by that time, I had ceased to keep birds of prey, either diurnal or nocturnal—so tenacious are the bands of old associations.

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## REVIEW.

### A DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH AND FOLK NAMES OF BRITISH BIRDS.\*

An interesting work, which, including variations of spelling, contains nearly 5000 names.

English *book*-names are gathered from past authors giving the history and first usage of the *accepted* names of species, and also the provincial, local, and dialect names in use now or formerly in the British Isles. The accepted English names are printed in capitals, whilst the names of introduced or doubtful species are in italics.

We find the Siskin is called Aberdevine, etc. The Bullfinch, "Hoop" (it is known under that name in Cornwall).

Avocet is derived from *Avocetta*, probably meaning a graceful little bird, etc., etc.

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\* A Dictionary of English and Folk Names of British Birds with their History, meaning and first usage ; and the Folk-lore, Weather-lore, Legends, etc. relating to the more familiar species, by H. KIRKE SWANN.

[WITHERBY & CO., 326, High Holborn, London, W.C., 1913].

Brent Goose comes from the Welsh, *brenig* = a limpet. The actual word "Bird" was formerly *Brid* or *Bryd*, which was derived from the Anglo-Saxon *bredan*, to breed. The term, we are told by Mr. Swann, was properly applicable to the young only, and seems synonymous with *brood*. (A. Sax., *brod*), the proper term for the adult bird being fowl. (A. Sax. *fugol*). According to Poole, *brid* still survives in Staffordshire. Several blank pages are provided as memoranda for additional names for the reader's own notes.

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## MEMBERS OUGHT TO WRITE MORE FOR THE MAGAZINE.

If the members wish me to continue the work of editing our Magazine, I must ask them to one and all do their best to provide me with more articles, notes, and photographs. I do the work gratuitously, and it is by no means light, taking up a great part of my time; and I am never idle. I am moving to a new home (in Herefordshire) in the autumn, which change will find me with little leisure time. I sent a letter to every member when I first took up the work, begging for articles and notes on birds, and I may perhaps be allowed to add, charging nothing for at least 400 stamps. To have to continually urge members to write is most irksome to me, and must be (if they pay any attention) most tiresome to them: but what is still more so to an editor is that he has to pad and write notes which are simply forced, and therefore cannot be really good.

If members think I have nothing else to do they are very much mistaken. There are a few who are always helping, and the thanks of the Society are due to them: but there are surely more who could write and do not.

HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

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## THE ILLUSTRATION FUND.

If members will each according to their means, subscribe to the illustration fund, we can probably issue a coloured plate once a month. If every member would give *half-a-crown* a year, it would be something. The coloured plates are extremely expensive. Let

each member do his and her utmost to make our Magazine a worthy periodical, for it goes across the seas, not only to the Continent, but also to Africa, Australia, and America.

N.B. Advertisements, with the money for them, should be sent to the Publishers, and not to the Editor.

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## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

### NAME OF WEAVER.

SIR,—Can you help me to identify two Yellow Weavers? The cock, which was bought from a dealer as a hen Rufous-necked, is rather larger than my cock Rufous-neck. The back-wings are greenish yellow, face in front of eyes, upper part of throat brownish black, remainder of body rich yellow.

The hen is the size of a Grenadier Weaver. Back and wings greenish yellow as in the cock, face and remainder of body chrome yellow. Neither of these birds have had a seasonal change of colour.

I am anxious to know the name of these birds as they have mated and the hen is sitting on eggs.

Thanking you in anticipation.

WM. SHORE BAILY.

*The following reply has been sent to Mr. Baily:—*

The Black and Yellow true Weavers are most difficult to name with certainty, excepting by comparison with skins in a Museum.

I think it probable that your bird will prove to be the Masked Weaver (*Sitagra monacha*), but it might be *S. luteola* or *Hyphantornis vitellinus*.

With these birds having a similar general plan of colouring it is always most satisfactory to take them to a Natural History Museum for identification.

A. G. BUTLER.

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### NAME OF FRUIT PIGEON.

SIR,—I have just received four specimens of the enclosed African Fruit Pigeons, but unfortunately the one enclosed died when being sent to me from the gentleman that hand-reared them and brought them over from West Africa. The purple patch on the shoulder blade shows much more distinctly in the three living birds. The four birds were reared from two nests and are about twelve months old. If you can identify them for me I shall esteem it a favour and enclose stamp for reply.

Thanking you in anticipation.

P. W. THORNILEY.

*The following reply has been sent to Mr. Thorniley:—*

I make out your bird to be either the female or young of the Bare-faced Fruit-Pigeon (*Vinago calva*): it answers well to the description of that species in the Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum, and there seems to be nothing else that it could be.

A. G. BUTLER.

FORTHCOMING SHOW OF FOREIGN BIRDS AT THE  
HORTICULTURAL HALL.

SIR,—It may interest members of the Avicultural Society to know that the Foreign Bird Exhibitors' League has guaranteed twenty-eight classes for foreign birds at the next London Cage Bird Association's Show, to be held at the Horticultural Hall on Nov. 27, 28, 29. The classification is as follows:—

- (1). All species of Cockatoos and Macaws.
- (2). Grey Parrots and Amazons (*i.e.*, all species *Crysotis*).
- (3). All species Lovebirds, Passerine, Lineolated, All Green, Canary-winged, White-winged Orange-fronted, Tovi, Golden-fronted and Tui Parrakeets.
- (4). All other species, Parrots, including Eclecti.
- (5). Green Budgerigars.
- (6). All species Ringnecks, including Alexandrine, Ring-necked, Blossom-headed, Rose-headed, Slate-headed, Malabar, Derbyan, Moustache, Javan, Nicobar, St. Lucien Parrakeets, etc.; common Red Rosellas, Redrumps, Quakers and Cockateels.
- (7). Lorries, Lorikeets and Hanging Parrots (*Loriculæ*).
- (8). All other species Parrakeets.
- (9). Yellow Budgerigars, White Java Sparrows, Bengalese and White Java Doves.
- (10). Common Mannikins, including Black-headed, White-headed, Tri-coloured, Magpie, Bronze, Spice, Striated, Sharp-tailed, Bib-finches, Grey Java, Sparrows, and Common Combassous.
- (11). All species Weavers, Whydahs, and Long-tailed Combassous.
- (12). Common Ribbon Finches, Zebra & Saffron Finches and Silverbills.
- (13). Gouldians, Fire-tailed, Painted, Crimson, Rufous Grassfinches, Parrot Finches, Pintailed Nonpariels, Common Nonpareil and Rainbow Buntings.
- (14). All other species Grassfinches, including Masked, Long-tailed, White-eared, Ringed, Bicheno, Diamond, Parson, Cherry, Quail and Red-headed Finches; Rhodesian Cutthroats, Pectoral, Yellow-rumped, Chestnut-breasted and Rufous-backed Mannikins.
- (15). Common African Fire Finches, Cordon Bleus, Zebra Waxbills, and Lavender Finches.
- (16). Common and Green Avadavats, St. Helena, Grey and Orange-cheeked Waxbills.
- (17). All other species Waxbills.
- (18). All species Cardinals.
- (19). All species Serins, Wild Canaries, and Siskin, including Alario, Grey and Green Singing Finches, Sulphur and St. Helena Seed-eaters, etc.
- (20). All other species True Finches, Sparrows, Buntings, Grosbeaks, etc., not otherwise mentioned.
- (21). All species Doves, Quails, Partridges, and Rails.
- (22). All species Sugar and Sunbirds, Flower-peckers, Quits, Honey-eaters, Zosterops, and Fruit-suckers.

(23). Scarlet, Blue, Black, Maroon, Silver-blue, Violet, Olive, Palm, Superb, Archbishop, and Tricoloured Tanagers.

(24). All other species Tanagers.

(25). All species of True Bulbuls (*Pycnonotida*), Pekin and Blue Robins, Dayal Birds and Shamahs.

(26). All species Crows, Mynahs, Starlings, Hangnests, Troupials, Cow Birds, Cassiques, and Marsh Birds.

(27). Pied, Albino, Lutino, Melanistic, or other abnormally coloured birds. Blue Budgerigars and Foreign Bird Hybrids.

(28). All other species not previously mentioned, including Birds of Paradise, Manucodes, Touracos, Toucans, Trogons, Tyrants, Shrikes, Flycatchers, Woodpeckers, Kingfishers, Barbets, Pittas and Thrush-like Birds, etc.

It will be seen that this classification is an encouragement to exhibit comparatively common as well as rare birds, and I therefore take the liberty of asking members of the Society to help to make it possible to hold a really good and representative show of foreign birds once a year in London by sending as many entries as they can.

Every care will be taken of exhibits, and special arrangements will be made with all Railway Companies with reference to their transit.

There is practically no risk in showing birds if they are sent in proper show cages, and I should be only too pleased to supply members with any information they may require with reference to the easiest and cheapest methods to adopt when sending birds to shows or any other particulars relating thereto. Only 402 entries are required to make this venture a complete success, and members of this Society have in their possession enough material to make an exhibition which should equal or even outrival anything in the nature of a flower show, to say nothing of being far more interesting.

ALLEN SILVER.

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“FOR LOVE OF SCIENCE.”

As Editor, I should *especially* wish to draw the attention of the Members of the Society to the fact that I must put on record my entire disagreement with Dr. Butler's statements in his article in the June number with regard to the plume trade in general and Egrets in particular.

My article upon the Lesser Egret, and my footnote on p. 250 with regard to the enforcing of the Aigrette Law proves this.

I was absent in Italy during April and May, and did not see Dr. Butler's article until it appeared in the Magazine, as Mr. Seth-Smith had kindly undertaken some of my work whilst I was abroad.

I am sorry that I must so entirely disagree with Dr. Butler, especially as he is one of the few members who really works for the benefit of the progress of the Magazine.

Those who have thoroughly studied the facts, are almost universally

agreed that it is impossible for the agents of the plume-traders to pick up shed "aigrettes," and that these feathers are undoubtedly plucked from the slaughtered birds. If moulted plumes can be obtained as Dr. Butler mentions, how is it that the poor Egrets are becoming exterminated? Even if it is not necessary to slaughter them, the fact remains that they *are* slaughtered, and I consider it a most *abominable* and vicious way of obtaining a living. No doubt plenty of people have earned a living by slave-traffic, opium growing, etc., etc., but are we to hesitate to put down such things on that account? Human beings bring punishments upon themselves, the birds are unable to reason sufficiently to avert the miserable destiny which, owing to humans, so often awaits them.

Let the plume-traders and milliners employ the people in the factories and workshops upon artificial plumes, etc.

If the turnover represents more than six million sterling a year, and more than 50,000 men and women derive a living through the plume trade, all I can say is that it is a shameful blot upon humanity's civilized escutcheon, and are we to countenance such an evil, connected as it is with intense cruelty to the birds, because *people* mustn't suffer, whatever they may do?

Are we, as aviculturists, who strive to keep a few birds happy in our aviaries, where they sing and build their nests, and are protected from many foes; to encourage indiscriminate and cruel slaughter, instead of doing our utmost to crush it down?

I drew attention in a review, to Mr. Hornaday's book, "Our Vanishing Wild Life;" and no one after reading that would be anywhere but on the side of the persecuted and exterminated birds.

Mr. HORNADAY says:—"To offset as far as possible the absolutely true charge that Egrets bear their best plumes in the breeding season, when the hapless young are in the nest, and the parent birds must be killed to obtain their plumes, *the feather trade* has obtained from three Frenchmen—Leon Laglaize, Mayeul Grisol and F. Geay—a beautiful and plausible story to the effect that in Venezuela the enormous output of Egret plumes has been obtained *by picking up, off the bushes and out of the water and mud, the shed feathers of those birds!* According to the story, Venezuela is full of "Egret farms, called 'garceros'—where the birds breed and moult under strict supervision, and kindly drop their feathers in such places that it is possible to *find them, and to pick them up, in a high state of preservation!* and we are asked to believe that it is these very Venezuelan picked up feathers that command in London the high price of forty-four dollars per ounce!

"Mr. Laglaize is especially exploited by Mr. Downham, as a French traveller of high standing, and well-known in the Zoological Museums of France; but, sad to say, when Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn cabled to the Museum of Natural History in Paris, inquiring about Laglaize, the cable flashed back the one significant word: "Inconnu!" (Unknown!)

"That the great supply of immaculately perfect Egret plumes that annually come out of Venezuela could by any possibility be picked up in the

“swamps where they were shed and dropped by the Egrets, is ENTIRELY PREPOSTEROUS AND INCREDIBLE. The whole proposition is denounced by several men of standing and experience, none of whom are ‘inconnu.’”

Mr. Hornaday proceeds to quote a letter to him by Mr. E. H. McIlhenny from Avery Island, La—written just a year ago; in which, amongst other things, he writes: speaking of the Egrets he has on his strictly protected ground, on which there are now (OWING TO PROTECTION) fully 2,500 pairs of ‘Snowy Herons’ and altogether not less than 20,000 pairs of various species of Herons and Egrets—“I have had these Herons under my close inspection for the past seventeen years, and I have not in any one season picked up or seen *more than a dozen discarded plumes*. I remember that last year I picked up four plumes of the Snowy Heron that were in one bunch. I think these must have been plucked out of fighting birds.

“This year I have found only one plume so far. I enclose it herewith. You will notice that it is one of the shorter plumes, and is badly worn at the end, as have been all the plumes which I have picked up in my Heronry. I am positive that it is not possible for natural shed plumes to be gathered commercially. I have a number of times talked with plume-hunters from Venezuela and other South American countries, and I have never heard of any Egret feathers being gathered by being picked up after the birds have shed them.”

In conclusion I must add that had I seen Dr. Butler’s article before it went to press, this letter would have been published as an accompaniment to it, or else I should have asked Dr. Butler to cut out certain paragraphs.

HUBERT D. ASTLEY, *Editor*.

AN ANSWER.—By LORD WILLIAM PERCY.

SIR,—In the June number of the *Avicultural Magazine* an article appeared, entitled “For Love of Science,” from the pen of Dr. Butler, which was read by more than one member with some astonishment.

It consisted of a lamentation on the evil effects of Bird Protection in general, and its baneful influence on the activities of collectors and aviculturists in particular, and he goes out of his way to say a word in defence of the plumage hunter and the egg collector, and asks us to regard them as victims of the misplaced zeal of the bird protectionist.

Some of the arguments with which this article was fortified were novel. Let us take a few samples.

From it we learn that Egret plumes are not, as we supposed, taken from the body of freshly-killed birds, but are (in Venezuela) invariably gathered as moulted plumes lying thickly on the bushes and at the foot of the trees near the lagunos where these birds breed. Such travesties of the truth may be good enough to pass muster with, and salve the conscience of the fair lady who buys the plumes, but it is a little surprising to find such nonsense quoted by Dr. Butler. Never having been in Venezuela I cannot contradict the statement from

personal knowledge, but if it is suggested that the gathering of moulted plumes is the custom of the plume hunter in other parts of the world, I can assure him from personal knowledge that that is a delusion and a lie. In a district with which I am acquainted, and from which large quantities of Egret plumes are exported, every single plume is plucked from freshly-shot birds. But in those countries (unlike Venezuela apparently) Egrets do not moult their plumes in a condition in which they could be of any conceivable use for the adornment of hats.

Again, though no allusion is made by him to the ravages of the bird and egg collector as a factor in the extermination of British species, we find that the blame for the serious diminution of "one or two species" is accounted for by the "well-known fact that farmers and others" have so persecuted them "that they have been well-nigh exterminated." And yet memory fails to recall one single species, in this country at any rate, whose disappearance has been brought about by farmers, or in the agricultural interest.

We are treated, too, to such logic as the following. A collector in 1872 took 42 eggs from one Wryneck's nest, "which proved at least that the removal of a single sitting could have no injurious effect upon such fertile creatures as birds" !

Finally, in conclusion, we are warned that unless we take the place and do the duty of the birds of prey who formerly "broke up bird families to a certain extent, the protection afforded to these favoured species, rendered "immune from man's action," will assuredly result in the final extinction of these species through inbreeding.

This latter argument requires no comment, but it is so laughable that one is tempted to believe that he is indulging his sense of humour at the expense of his readers.

There are probably few of us who will be found to disagree with Dr. Butler that the regulations of the Wild Birds Protection Act leave much to be desired, and fewer still of us who are collectors in any shape or form, who are not continually hampered and irritated by the lack of discrimination—and often the folly—of the provisions of the Act; but futile lamentations on the part of the provisions of the collector, or for the matter of that on the part of the protectionist, are not very helpful contributions to the attainment of a better regulated system of protection—and for this reason.

The subject of bird protection is approached, both by the protectionist and the collector, solely from the point of view of the aims and aspirations of each, and neither the one nor the other claims the sympathy of the mass of the public.

On the one hand, we have articles from the hand of the humanitarian bird protectionist, of the ill-informed and always narrow-minded. He would desire to see all birds allowed to increase unchecked, regardless of the interests alike of the agriculturist and the game preserver, and of any other interest that clashes with his views.

On the other hand, we have the equally selfish complaints of the collector,

that his personal research—which is not seldom another name for a desire to accumulate an infinite number of eggs or skins—is interfered with by a badly regulated and senseless method of protection. There is a family likeness in his complaints, they usually include a plea for “the poor wild-fowler,” or the “industrious birdcatcher,” but the real burden of his complaint is that it is HIS aviary that cannot be filled without paying ‘exorbitant prices,’ or that HIS cabinet of skins and eggs requires more specimens. Unfortunately the collector has a bad reputation, and not a few deserve that reputation only too well.

But, curiously enough, there is one attribute which the advocates of protection and the collectors possess in common, and they are never tired of proclaiming in glowing language the intensity of their “Love of Science.”

Love of a cause is commonly gauged by the extent of sacrifice of personal aims that the lover is willing to make for the sake of the cause, and yet we search the writings of these protagonists in vain for any indication of the slightest willingness to subordinate their personal interests.

The Protection of Wild Birds in a thickly populated and highly developed country such as ours is admittedly an extremely difficult problem, and must depend largely upon the good will of the population. The economic value and importance of agricultural and sporting interests is sufficient guarantee that, even assuming the realization of the aspirations of the fanatical bird protectionist were desirable, they are utterly and hopelessly beyond his powers to attain.

The unchecked increase of the Peregrine and the Golden Eagle is as incompatible with the preservation of a grouse moor, as is the indefinite increase of the Bullfinch and the Hawfinch with the interests of the market gardener.

The only effect of advocating wholesale and unsystematic protection is to alienate the sympathy of a large body of public opinion: it is the very length of the list of protected birds (many of them in no want of protection) in the schedules of some Counties, that renders the Wild Birds Protection Act in some districts almost a dead letter, owing to the hopeless impossibility of enforcing its regulations. If the protectionist would confine his efforts to the protection of all species in such numbers as not to conflict with interests that must be considered, and at least in sufficient numbers as to adequately guarantee their continued existence on breeding species, he would find himself supported by every lover of birds in Great Britain, and at the same time do away with a considerable amount of the opposition he now encounters.

That there is still room for every British species to exist and continue to exist, there can be no room for doubt; and this is true of even the most destructive and predatory birds. But it is just here that the crux of the question arises, and the crux of the question is the collector. There are collectors, and collectors, but for the type of collector with which we are now concerned, no genuine lover of birds has anything but the bitterest condemnation.

To this type of collector the value of a British taken egg is exactly the measure of the rarity of the bird that laid it, and it is largely to these gentle-

men that we owe the present state of affairs, and the necessity for regulations which in their working hamper the pursuit of genuine research.

In justification of that proposition, let us consider for a moment the genesis of the Wild Birds Protection Acts. The indignation of the British public, which resulted in the agitation for the protection of wild birds was first brought about by two things : (1) the wanton slaughter of sea birds at the breeding stations in the interests of the plumage market, and (2) the no less reckless and senseless extermination of some of the finest British species by the egg collectors ; the former done with the open object of commercial gain ; the latter perpetrated ostensibly in the guise of a ' Love of Science,' in fact for no better reason than the collector's own personal gratification. The plumage hunter was easily dealt with ; the nature of his work compelled him to work openly ; and the Wild Birds Protection Act put a stop to the wholesale slaughter of sea birds. Not so with the collector ; he works silently, and sometimes by singularly underhand methods, and continues to do an infinity of harm, always be it remembered, in the name of a ' Love of Science.' A love of science so genuine and intelligent that the last clutch of British taken Osprey eggs is of infinitely more value in his eyes than an exactly similar clutch taken on the Continent. As a result it has come to this, that there are some thirteen British breeding species that bred regularly with us up to recent years, that are at this moment either non-existent as breeding species or are hanging on in diminishing numbers too small to guarantee the continued existence of the species.

In this state of things the collector is solely to blame. It is true that in the case of many of them, modern conditions, draining, and the value of sporting rights, etc. had already rendered it impossible that they should continue in their former number, but their continued existence in reduced numbers was, and is, not only possible but certain, if they could only be protected from the intolerable lust of the egg collector. In such species, the last lingering hope rests with the public spirited efforts of individual landowners and others who, at no small expense to themselves, are engaged in the endeavour to retain some of the finest British birds on the active list. All honour to them, and every lover of birds in Great Britain gives them unstinted gratitude.

It is nothing short of a disgrace that these efforts are not better rewarded, and in some cases are totally wanting in results. The Kite has been saved in the nick of time, though the attentions of the collector have gone forth to rob us of the full possibilities resulting from their protection, while the efforts of gentlemen who have undertaken the protection of the few remaining nests of Montagu's Harrier hen have been almost entirely without success.

In others it is even now too late, and one of the most magnificent sights in the whole of bird life, that of a wild Osprey fishing, is no longer to be seen in these islands, while the empty eyries of the sea Eagle and the Osprey stand as recent monuments to this sickening travesty of a love of Science.

It is small wonder that those, and they are many, to whom Nature is

something more than a playground for the collector, and who hold, and unjustly hold, that genuine scientific research has never yet demanded the extinction of a single species, regard the collector with the bitterest feelings of distrust.

With such standing examples of his work, is it wonderful that the dog gets a bad name, that the very word collector has become a byword for merciless and wanton destruction, and that the public have some difficulty in discriminating between the genuine student of Natural History who is honestly trying to work out some problem, and the egg-snatching, bird-mongering hypocrite who talks of a Love of Science?

Who can wonder that those who derive perhaps the keenest enjoyment in life from association with the wild birds of this country, and who are often far better naturalists than some collectors who possess large museums crammed with dry skins and empty egg shells, sometimes overstep the limits of moderation in their frantic desire to prevent any more species being reduced to that degree of rarity at which they become the special subjects of the greed of the collector. They know only too well, that for every collection of eggs made with the object of making any serious contribution to the study of Oölogy, there are scores which have no object at all, unless the accumulation of an indefinite number of clutches of some rare birds eggs, of which the proud possessor can boast that "he has taken them all himself in the British Isles" can be called an object.

They know too, from bitter experience, that there is a type of egg collector whose greed for eggs has so far got the better of his sense of honour that he does not scruple to abuse the hospitality of landowners when granted leave to "come and see the birds breeding on the ground," nor hesitate to attempt to induce his employées to break faith with their master by offering large bribes to them for allowing eggs to be removed, which he knows full well are the special object of his host's protection.

It may be too much to hope that in the near future the protection of wild birds should be entrusted to a central committee—not of politicians—but of ornithological experts, empowered to grant licence to properly accredited persons to obtain the necessary specimens for genuine study, and who would be in a position to discriminate in the choice of individuals to whom such license was granted. Surely it is not too much to hope that a step in the right direction should be made, and that certain Ornithological Associations should show in a rather more rigorous fashion their disapproval of acts of useless destruction, and their determination to exclude from membership such as are guilty of them.

It is only too common to hear members of such associations condemning, in private, in the bitterest language, the performances of fellow members, while, when the opportunity occurs of expressing their disapproval in public, fear of unpopularity leads them to remain in silence.

WILLIAM PERCY.

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AN INFLUENTIAL MEMBER writes:—"I am sure Dr. Butler's article is against the views of the very large majority of the members of the Avicultural Society.

"However correct his views may be as to Bird-catching and the collection of large series of eggs as he knew it when he was a lad, *it is not so now!*

"No place is so remote that it cannot be reached by motor-car, cycle, or steamboat; and the number of collectors and of Field Clubs and Museums is very largely increased during the last twenty years; while the increase of population, the development of seaside places and golf courses in localities hitherto derelict, and a higher standard of farming as well as *closer game-preserving*, have all contributed to make many species—fairly common 20 or 30 years ago—extremely rare now."

A MEMBER writes—"I do not approve of Dr. Butler's article. From an aviculturist of his experience I should have expected more sound reasoning. He deplores the restrictions placed by the modern bird protection regulations on the study of Oölogy and Ornithology generally, but suggests no means by which a legitimate amount of scientific research may be made compatible with the effective preservation of rare and desirable species. In the matter of allowing the taking and hand-rearing of nestlings he is equally vague; he forgets too that all persons who attempt hand-rearing are not possessed of the skill and knowledge of an M.B.O.U., and are only too likely to make a horrible mess of the business—and can he quote a single instance of a person being prosecuted for acting as he did towards his Pied Wagtail by saving it from an untimely end? He preaches moderation in all things, but displays an attitude of immoderate hostility towards the domestic cat—a very estimable beast with many supporters!—though *not* good for birds, I admit. Then his remarks on the feather trade are doubtful in facts and do not harmonize at all with your's (*i.e.* the Editor's). A thoroughly undesirable industry cannot be defended solely on the ground that it gives employment—you might as well argue that the slave trade ought never to have been abolished because it gave occupation to seamen employed on the slave ships.\*

"Lastly, his picture of the starving children of the ex-birdcatcher is over-drawn, and his remarks about the evil effects of in-breeding, fanciful."

"Why cannot Members of the R.S.P.C.A. and bird-keepers act together for the promotion of the welfare of birds in captivity—or otherwise?"

"If the former would only realise that the keeping of birds in cages is not necessarily in the least cruel, and the latter would admit that the bird-trader is oftentimes in need of drastic reform and better regulation, how much improved things would be! I should have thought it would be quite easy for those who take an interest in the birds of a particular country or continent, to arrange to pay the wages of an experienced man who would undertake all the catching,

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\* I wrote this same line of argument, before receiving the above letter. ED.

"etc. in person, and would see to the management of the birds on the voyage.\*  
 "I should certainly prefer to spend my money in securing a healthy bird,  
 "properly brought over, than to bestowing it in return for a ragged skinful of  
 "septic fever!!"

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SIR,—From Dr. Butler's article, Love of Science does not seem compatible with Love of Birds to say the least, and it would be a great pity if many adopted the views enumerated by him.

Indiscriminate taking of clutches of scarcer and rarer birds' eggs can only lead to extinction of that species in England, and prevention of any of the species of birds once common in this country being re-established.

The egg collector, who takes clutch after clutch, to show some slight difference in colouration or marking, is clearly diminishing the breed.

Wholesale "scientific research" only equals wholesale scientific destruction. The fact that the *owner* of the estate where certain rare birds breed, may desire to retain them (and is willing to run the risk of "inbreeding of brothers and sisters") does not appear to come in for consideration.

Man may possibly not succeed greatly by attempting to assist nature! he succeeds admirably though when he attempts to wipe out nature.

With regard to Egret plumes, it may not be *necessary* to kill the bird, but I have little doubt which method is quickest and generally adopted by the plume hunter, and I do not think it will be that of gathering up stray moulted half-broken feathers! Let us hope the Egret appreciates protection. R.

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*Le Chevîl* in a leading article "Pour et contre les Oiseaux," criticizes Dr. Butler's views, and makes the following remarks with regard to the 'aigrettes.'

Mais là où le Dr. Butler est inexcusable c'est lorsque lui, naturaliste, accepte les grossiers mensonges de la plumasserie, à savoir que les crosses d'aigrettes sont ramassées par les sauvages dans les marais après la mue et, aux nombreux témoignages des voyageurs impartiaux qui ont assisté aux massacres de ces échassiers pendant l'incubation, qui ont vu l'agonie des milliers de jeunes oiseaux privés de leurs parents, qui ont constaté l'abandon des héronnières que peuplaient naguère d'innombrables colonies, il préfère les assertions cent fois démenties de voyageurs de commerce pourvoyeurs de la plumasserie que leur seul intérêt aurait du lui rendre suspects.

Dans la même livraison de l'Avicultural Magazine ou le Dr. Butler plaidait la cause de la plumasserie, le directeur du recueil, M. Hubert D. Astley, consacrait quelques pages à la petite Aigrette. On y trouve une réfutation indirecte de plusieurs des assertions ou mieux citations de l'article "en faveur de la science."

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\* This idea has been mooted; but what if only *one* rare specimen arrived, subscribed for by three or four members? Personally, one would *never* speak again to the one who obtained *Æthopyga ignicauda*, or some such beauty which my soul yearned for!!! Major Perreau and Major Boyd Horsbrugh have done much towards importing rare and healthy birds. ED.

## PROTECTION OF BIRDS FROM THE PLUME TRADERS.

Mr. WILLIAM T. HORNADAY, SC. D., writes in June, from New York, the following:—

DEAR Mr. ASTLEY,—Our measure in the new Tariff Bill, to absolutely prohibit the importation of all wild birds' plumage for millinery purposes, went swimmingly through the House of Representatives, and passed before the milliners had a chance to train their guns upon it. You never saw a lot of feather dealers so completely surprised and chagrined as they were. That they were *caught napping*, was not our fault; but they feel very sore, just the same. Now they have hired distinguished lawyers, and set them to work in the Senate to defeat our clause. Naturally, we are fighting for our own, and whenever we see a head, we hit it! The good and the sensible women of the country have become thoroughly aroused regarding this matter, and are flooding members of the Senate with letters demanding the passage of our clause exactly as it stands. But this is not a quarter of what they will do provided it develops that there is any danger that our clause is likely to be stricken out.

I am so busy with this campaign that I scarcely know which way to turn, and my desk is piled high with neglected correspondence. Some day I may be able to write something for the *Avicultural Magazine*: but at present I have no thoughts for anything other than the war with the feather trade.

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 THE LAST GREAT AUK.

THE DUCHESS OF BEDFORD writes—"I celebrated the centenary of the death of the last British Great Auk by visiting the grave of William Foulis, the man who shot it. I was shown it by an old man who knew Foulis, and had heard the story of its death from him."

\* \* \*

## BIRDS ON FAIR ISLAND.

THE DUCHESS OF BEDFORD also writes—"I had fully intended to write an account of my spring visit to Fair Isle, but alas! though I went there, the S.E. wind would not blow, and we had no birds."

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 PARRAKEETS AT WOBURN ABBEY.

LORD TAVISTOCK writes—"The news from Woburn is both good and bad—chiefly bad. The Barnard Parrakeet brought off his first family all right, and the Stanleys have three or four young nearly ready to fly (first week of June), and the Bourke's are sitting; on the other hand I have lost my only Blue-winged Grass Parrakeet, and only hen Yellow-belly, from accidents; the hen Red-capped Parrakeet refuses to lay anything but soft-shelled eggs, and the cock Blue Budgerigar died suddenly, the moment his wife started sitting, and the hen Stanley (No. 2) was found dead on her eggs."

\* \* \*

Mr. ASTLEY'S two breeding pairs of Ruddy-headed Geese have hatched out young.

\* \* \*

A pair of Coscoroba Swans at Woburn Abbey hatched out five young ones in April, which unfortunately only survived about a fortnight.

\* \* \*

Mr. Astley has a pair of *Ixula flavicollis*. They came from Major Horsbrugh's Indian Collection, and, although not brightly coloured, in fact more after the hues of a White-throat (except for the broad band of yellowish chestnut at the back of the neck), are very pretty and graceful, with the movements and demeanour of the Blue-winged Siva. Their most noticeable adornment is a full crest, which can be raised over the head, with the tips of the feathers inclined to an outward curve. They come from the Himalayas.

Major Perreau also imported three specimens this year.

\* \* \*

The Green-breasted Pitta, which Mr. Astley purchased from Major Horsbrugh's Indian Collection (*P. cucullata*) is in one of his large aviaries, where it enjoys hopping under a group of bamboos and bathing in a pool of running water. It is a tame bird, and with long hops will come to take a mealworm from the fingers. The Pittas have a fascinating way of quivering their extremely short tails, after the manner of a Redstart.

\* \* \*

Mr. Astley's old pair of Hooded Parrakeets (*Psephotus dissimilis*) which reared four young ones last October, have bred again, and two fine birds left their nest in a large hollow log on the first of June. They look as if they were male and female. This is the first time that this pair of Parrakeets have nested in the springtime.

\* \* \*

There are now twelve Hooded Parrakeets in the aviaries at Benham Valence.

\* \* \*

The Queen Alexandra Parrakeets in the same aviaries are again nesting, but a beautiful adult female was found dead during the first week of June, with a wound in her neck. She had eggs in a log, so the loss is very deplorable.

\* \* \*

In the same aviaries, a pair of White-capped Redstarts (*Phœnicura leucocephala*) look most lovely. The sexes are alike, but the female is somewhat smaller, and the white cap is not so broad. The fiery chestnut mingled with the rich black, and enhanced by the snowy cap, is very striking.

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#### “THE HOME-LIFE OF A GOLDEN EAGLE.”

The Publishers of this successful work (Messrs. Witherby & Co.) have, at the request of many purchasers of the book, now prepared PHOTOGRAPHIC ENLARGEMENTS of six of the principal plates. The enlargements measure  $9\frac{1}{4}$  inches by  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

## FEEDING WILD BIRDS ON QUAKER OATS.

A lady who for some years lived in a small house hidden away between wooded hills in Herefordshire, had regularly fed the wild birds from her drawing room window with dried Flake oats. I visited this house for the first time last February, and a prettier sight I never saw. As soon as the sash window was pushed up there was a frou-frou of innumerable wings, and down fluttered Chaffinches, Great and Blue Tits, Robins and Greenfinches, Hedge Accentors, whilst almost immediately the more sedate Blackbirds and Thrushes came hopping from the bushes near at hand.

All the birds know (for they are still fed) the exact hours when the flake oats will be thrown to them ; morning, noon and evening.

What struck me so much was the intense blue of the Blue Tits as they flew down just under the window for flakes, as well as the magnificent colouring of the Chaffinches. They certainly *looked* more brilliant than usual. Mr. Headley, of Haileybury College, the brother of the lady mentioned, writes to me—"I fear I cannot give an elaborate account of the birds my sister used to feed. On the 16th of January, she wrote that there was a hard frost and snow, the birds frantic for food. Many big and impudent Blackbirds, one bulky hen continually fighting a cock bird. [She must have been a militant suffragette, for she often had the best of it in a tussle!] One Thrush much scared, attracted into a quiet corner where it put away 110 flake oats."

The lady bountiful also wrote—"Blackbirds are bold and impudent : Robins, bright and perky ; Chaffinches are comfortable and important in their ways ; Hedge Accentors quiet and cheerful, but the Thrush is sad.

"The number of birds that assembled was astonishing. There was quite a whirr of wings if there was a sudden scare and they all rose together."

H. D. A.

## EGYPTIAN PIED CHAT.

SIR,—I think the name used for the Egyptian Pied Chat, illustrated and described in Mr. Astley's article in the May number of the Magazine (p. 199) should have been *Saxicola lugens*, and not *S. leucomelena*.\*

The bird was named *lugens* by Lichtenstein in 1823. The name *leucomelena* was given by Burchell in his "Travels in South Africa" in 1822 to the Chat which had already been named *monticola* by Vieillot in 1818—a bird only inhabiting *South Africa*.

Besides being a synonym of a different bird, *leucomelena* has the disadvantage of being confusingly like *leucomela*, the name which Dresser used for *Saxicola lugens* in "The Birds of Europe," but which seems to have been given by Pallas in 1770 to another Black-throated Chat, which again had already been named *Motacilla pleschanka* by Lepechin in the same year.

Khartoum, 20/5/1913.

A. L. BUTLER.

\* *S. leucomelena* was an oversight. *S. leucomela* is correct. ED.

## GOULDIAN FINCHES.

SIR,—Will you kindly tell me if Gouldian Finches would live in a warmly situated outdoor aviary here during the winter, and would the cold be too great?

Which are the hardier, Red-faced or Black-faced, and how can you distinguish cocks from hens?

A. A. THOM.

*The following reply has been sent to Mr. Thom:—*

My experience of Gouldian Finches is that the Black and Red-headed phases are equally hardy. I left my own birds in an outdoor aviary for some weeks after the commencement of sharp frosts: their bath-water was frozen over every morning and, after I had smashed the surface ice with a hammer, the Gouldian-finches immediately jumped into the ice-cold water and bathed with the greatest pleasure.

Cocks can be told at a glance from hens (apart from other differences) by the purplish ultramarine breast-belt; in the hen this belt is dull rosy lilac. I still have one cock red-head living of the pair which I bred in 1905; it is therefore nearly eight years old, but quite active and healthy.

If your aviary has a covered portion I should think it safe to winter Gouldian-finches in it.

A. G. BUTLER.

## BIRD-WATCHING IN FLORIDA.

A pleasant picture of Bird-watching comes from Tampa, in Florida. Mr. JAMES SHAW, an octogenarian correspondent, writes:—

“I have many friends among the birds, principally Blue Jays, Mocking-birds, a small bird I call a Wren, several kinds of Woodpeckers, Mourning Doves, Humming Birds, and occasionally Butcher-birds. Opposite my house a small stream, known as Spanish Town Creek, flows down to the bay, and is a favourite resort for my feathered friends . . . I am principally attracted by the Mocking-bird—such a cheerful, happy, companionable bird—a live oak close to our porch is a favourite spot; no false modesty about him! Many times he will come down where I can almost touch him, and thrill me with his matchless song. His dropping song when approaching his mate is wonderful. He sings the first stanza in a low dreamy voice, and then as if the sweetness of his love exalted him, he lifts his voice higher and higher until the air rings with its melody. His mate twitters an answer. His response comes like the notes of a silver trumpet. He springs up into the air and slowly drops singing, alighting on a twig above his mate, and beginning to fall from branch to branch, but singing more softly and sweetly as he approaches her.

I have seen this many times as I sit in my porch.”

(From *Bird Notes and News*).

NOTICES TO MEMBERS—(Continued from page ii. of cover.)

NEW MEMBERS.

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- Mr. HENRY W. LEWIS, Superintendent Memphis Zoo., Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.A.  
Mr. L. BARLOW-MASSICKS, The Mount, Rotherham.  
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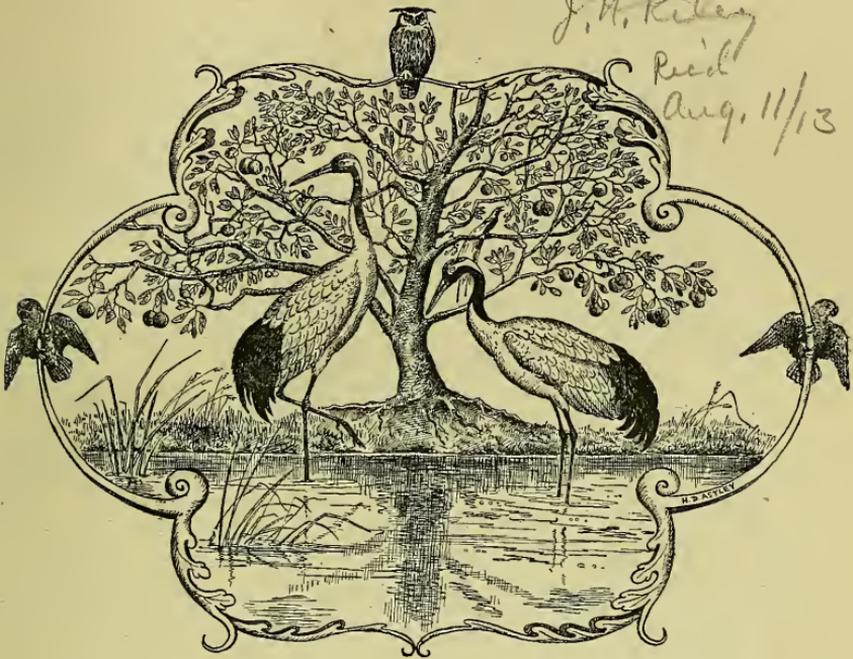
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BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

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## SOME OF MY SUNBIRDS.

By ALFRED EZRA.

### THE AMETHYST RUMPED SUNBIRD.

*Arachnecthra zeylonica.*

My first experience of this beautiful bird was two years ago, when I received six, sent by my brother from India. Four of them were cocks in colour, and the other two looked like hens. They arrived in very good condition and I only kept two of these. One in colour, and the other because he was a beautifully shaped bird. The latter turned out my best, and was evidently a young cock, as after two months he moulted out a splendid bird and such a lovely colour! This bird I have shown three times and he has never been beaten. Both my Amethysts are just going through their third moult and look as healthy as ever, and so happy. They have quite a pretty song and make charming pets. The two are very much alike in their ways, with this exception, that the best bird goes to bed very early as soon as it gets dark, and will not move or feed even with the electric lights on, whereas the other is always jumping about and feeding, and will only retire when the lights are put out. At the show last winter I had to put my hand into the cage and wake the former several times to feed.

All my Sunbirds are fed on Mellin's, Nestle's, and honey, and sometimes I make a change and give them Horlick's Malted Milk instead of Nestle's. The proportions are—a heaped-up teaspoonful of each ingredient in a breakfast-cup of boiling water. They all eat grapes and tiny green flies, but the two Amethysts have a much larger menu. They will eat, besides the above, lettuce,

spiders, fresh wasp grubs, live ants' eggs, and the thing they love most of all is a small caterpillar. They will eat as many as half-a-dozen straight off and take them from my fingers. The other varieties I have, are new arrivals and will not eat anything so far, except the syrup, grapes, and green flies. I think they only take to eating a variety of things after they have been kept for some time. A bath they all look forward to and have one every morning, summer and winter. They do best in a bright room where the temperature does not vary much, and about 60 degrees is quite warm enough.

#### THE BLACK BREASTED YELLOW BACKED SUNBIRD.

*A. saturata.*

This bird is the only one of his kind in the country, having been lately imported by Mr. Frost, and is a perfect pet, being so tame and gentle in his ways. He is smaller than the Amethyst, but has a longer tail. In colour he is black, though the back is a maroon red. Crown of head and a narrow stripe down each side of the throat a brilliant metallic violet-blue with a steel blue tail and a yellow patch on the lower back. Very dainty in his ways and movements; in fact he seems more refined, if I may use this expression, than all the other Sunbirds.\*

*To be continued.*

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### MATING OF TWO SPECIES OF IBIS.

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

For some years I have kept in a large flight aviary two pairs of the Australian Straw-necked Ibis (*I. spinicollis*) and three years ago I turned in a Black-headed White Indian Ibis, near akin to the Sacred Ibis, which was at the time an immature bird. In the summer of 1911 one pair of the Straw-necks nested, but just as the three eggs which were laid were about to hatch, owing to the bickering and squabbling which went on between the nesting pair and the pair which had not taken upon themselves the cares of a family, the eggs were rolled out and broken, shewing young almost fully developed.

In 1912 nothing happened, but this summer two pairs have

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\* cf. Frontispiece.

built nests, laid eggs, and quietly incubated side by side. But one pair has, or ought to have been through the Divorce Court, for a female Straw-neck has deserted her husband and "flown" away with the Black-headed White Ibis, who turns out to be of the male sex.

The two nests were constructed on the top of a diminutive willow tree, on which had been wired a large flat basket-lid. The Australian Straw-necks were the first to commence, in May, and their nest was not more than three or four inches high, composed of sticks and rushes. Two eggs only were laid, and never hatched.

But the second pair—the fly-away couple!—built their nest so that it touched the other, but topped it by several inches, in fact they were evidently bent on going one better in every way, for not only were three eggs laid instead of two, but the three hatched, where the two did not, proving that the course of true love does not always run smoothly.

The young hybrid Ibises were, I think, hatched on the 25th of June; but alas! were found dead on the 2nd of July. They were lying on the edges of the nest, and may have been kicked out by the other Ibises, or perhaps hauled out by one of the little South American Whistling Herons (*Syrigma cyanocephalum*), which are decidedly meddlesome.

The parents were most diligent in their care of them, both sexes taking their regular turns in brooding and feeding them, as they likewise did in incubating the eggs. At a regular hour in the afternoon, I have seen the male Indian White Ibis fly to the nest, grunting until the female Straw-neck rose up, when he would at once sit down in her place.

The young Ibises had thick black down on their heads and necks, where in both parents there is naked black skin. Their bills were about an inch long, with the *very* slightest tendency to a curve towards the tip; otherwise the bodies were, when examined, too decomposed to record many details.

In feeding them, the parents regurgitated their food, putting the tips of their bills into the nestling's mouths.

As usual, one regrets that one had not given the breeding birds a place to themselves, in which case, as far as I could foresee, the young would have been successfully reared.

SOME EXPERIENCES OF KING  
PARRAKEETS.

By THE MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK.

When the Editor first began to represent to me that it was the duty of all good members of the Avicultural Society in general, and of myself in particular, to contribute articles to the Magazine, I told him that on the occasion of my first appearance in print I wished to describe either a successful acclimatization experiment, or else the breeding of some rare bird for the first time in this country; there might then be some chance of my article containing at least one fact of novelty or interest. But success, as a rule, comes slower than disaster, and the nesting operations of most members of the parrot family—to which my own avicultural efforts have been mainly confined—are peculiarly lengthy: also the exhortations of the Editor, like the command of Nebuchadnezzar the King, wax very urgent, so I have had to put my pride in my pocket and write my experiences of a species which, unfortunately, is not to be numbered among my successes.

The Australian King Parrakeet (*Aprosmictus cyanopygius*), although not very freely imported, especially in recent years, is nevertheless too well known to need much description. It is a large bird, nearly twice the size of a Rosella, with a long and rather broad tail. The adult cock has the head, neck, and breast scarlet, or scarlet tinged with crimson: the rump bluish black, and most of the remainder of the plumage a uniform green. Across the wing coverts runs a narrow band of pale verdigris which is often nearly concealed by overlapping feathers of the prevailing darker tint, but which can be very conspicuous if the wing is held at a particular angle. On the nape of the neck is usually a patch of dark metallic blue, the size of which varies greatly in different individuals, probably according to the locality from which they come; some have hardly any blue at all.

The hen has no blue spot on the nape, and has the head, neck, and upper breast green, and she usually, if not invariably, lacks the verdigris bar on the wing coverts. In other respects her plumage resembles that of the male. Young birds in immature

plumage are like their mothers, but are said to have the tips of the tail-feathers pink. I am very much inclined to think that the young cocks can be distinguished from the hens by the verdigris wing bar above mentioned, which they certainly possess at a very early stage, if not actually at the time they leave the nest. Whether the young females also possess these light green feathers or not I cannot absolutely say, but I should consider it most unlikely that they do.

In build, the King Parrakeet bears a close resemblance to the Crimson-wing, and also to the magnificent members of the genus *Pyrrhulopsis*, which are unfortunately so rarely imported. It has little affinity to the *Platycerci*, either in form or manners, and it is difficult to understand why the old writer Greene desired to place it among them. The tail is long and broad it is true, but it is quite different in shape from that of the Rosella and its allies: and although the bird can and does spread it at times, it is quite unable to shake it in the manner so characteristic of nearly all the *Platycercines*. In fact the King resembles the latter in one respect only, viz., in its voice, the whistling call-note and sharper screaming cry uttered when the bird takes wing, both reminding one considerably of the notes of some members of the broadtail family.

The first King Parrakeet I remember seeing was kept as a cage-bird in our house about eighteen years ago and was ultimately given away to a friend in Scotland. He was reasonably tame, but not a particularly interesting pet (none of the larger Australian parrakeets are really suited to cage-life, *i.e.* they do not show to advantage in close confinement), and the whistling of "Pop goes the weasel" was I believe his only accomplishment. He ultimately died of sunstroke.

The next King, whose acquaintance I made, has had a more varied and interesting career; also, unlike too many of his relations I shall soon refer to, he is still alive and well. He came into my possession during the summer of 1911, and on arrival was turned into a large grass enclosure with a cut wing, together with a number of other Australian parrakeets which I intended for an experiment in acclimatization. By the time that the autumn moult had restored his powers of flight he had become accustomed to his surroundings, and for a while showed little disposition to stray from the garden.

Having no companions of his own kind he was obliged to content himself with the society of some Pennants, and when they and he were on the wing together it was interesting to notice how greatly they differed in their method of flight, the former moving in the long undulating sweeps characteristic of their family, and the latter propelling himself in a straight dove-like manner with sharp and regular strokes. The speed of both appeared to be about equal.

But the Pennants were after all only a makeshift, and in February,—when the good food and exercise which his free life gave him were rapidly bringing him into breeding condition—the King's plaintive call-note, one short and one long whistle, sounded more and more insistently until the day came when we missed him from the feeding trays, and it became only too evident that he had gone off on a hopeless quest in search of a mate.

Subsequent experience has taught me that I could not under the circumstances have expected anything else. An unmated bird of the parrot family, unless it be tame and attached to its owner, will, in nine cases out of ten, stray away as soon as the breeding impulse asserts itself, should it have the chance of doing so, and its fate is usually speedy and untimely. On this occasion, however, I was more fortunate than usual. About two days after the King's disappearance, we were out shooting at a place about four miles from home, when my eye was attracted by a brilliant patch of colour in a bare thorn edge, and there sure enough sat the missing bird, looking somewhat disconsolate after forty-eight hours of semi-starvation—for Kings, like Cockatiels and Redrumps and unlike the typical *Platycerci*, have little capacity for living in the country and fending for themselves during the winter months. I at once sent for a feeding-tray (the feeding-trays for the birds at liberty are so constructed as to be convertible at a moment's notice into a kind of box trap, by the pulling of a cord attached to one end) and in a very few minutes after its arrival he was safely taken.

A few days previous to the King's departure, I had with some difficulty obtained two hens—one apparently a fairly good bird, the other with something the matter with her wings which interfered considerably with her powers of flight. In order to restrain him from further wanderings, I shut up the King in an indoor aviary, in

company with the best hen, intending to set the pair at liberty when the warmer weather returned. But this unhappily was not to be, for a few weeks later the Queen sickened and died of a disease of the liver, possibly brought on by a too liberal indulgence in hemp-seed, and the hen with the stiff wings had therefore to take her place. In April, the pair went out together as I hoped to stay and perhaps to nest—but not a bit of it! The Queen's flight in the aviary had been clumsy and erratic, but outside she got on only too well, and without a day's hesitation she went straight off to the extreme limits of the Park, taking her mate with her. Two days later she was picked up exhausted and returned to me, and not long afterwards the cock was captured in a farmer's poultry-yard. So ended the second chapter.

Having no proper aviary accommodation for the recalcitrant pair, I was obliged to cut their wings, hoping that by the autumn the hen would have become better used to her surroundings and more accommodating in her behaviour.

That summer I obtained five more Kings—three young imported cocks and a splendid pair of adults—acclimatized and in perfect condition. With this stock I looked upon the establishment of a flock of Kings as merely a question of time. But, alas! “The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley,” and on this occasion my hopes were to be disappointed with a vengeance! About the middle of July my collection was swept by the scourge of septic fever, introduced I believe, in the first instance, by a newly-imported Crimson-wing I had rashly omitted to quarantine. Septic fever is often regarded as a disease which can only flourish in dirty cages and stuffy rooms: that it *originates* in such places is beyond doubt, but I learnt to my cost that it can be disseminated far and wide in the open air and among the cleanest surroundings. Not only did the outdoor aviary birds die, but many of those at complete liberty, which came occasionally to feed in the enclosures where their cut-winged relatives were kept. I did all I could and attempted to save the apparently healthy, by moving them from the infected ground, only to find that I had taken them in hand too late and had merely succeeded in spreading the disease still further. When the epidemic appeared to have run its course I had only one

King left—the old cock—all the rest had succumbed! Kings, like Crimson-wings, Blue-bonnets, and the little Parrakeets of the genus *Neophema* have not, even when in the most perfect health and vigour, the very slightest power of resisting fever infection; the true *Platycerci* withstand it better (Port Lincolns and Pennants are the most susceptible), and it was fortunate for me that they do, for otherwise I do not believe I should have had a single parrakeet left. Even as things were, however, my losses were sufficiently grievous, and for a long time Kings remained a very painful reminiscence. However, time may bring consolation, and when, in the late autumn, a pair of Kings was offered for sale at the disposal of M. Pauwels' splendid collection, I determined to have another try with them and attempt to repair my shattered fortunes. When the birds arrived, I found the cock as perfect as I could desire, but the hen rather disappointed me as she looked decidedly 'thick,' and I entertained grave doubts as to the soundness of her internal economy and particularly of her liver. However, she did better than I expected, improving steadily and looking quite another bird after a few weeks had passed. About the time of the arrival of the pair from Belgium, two more Kings reached me—a fine cock and a rather moderate hen who had lost the ends of some of her toes.

The former, together with the other male bird, I turned out with cut wings into a large glass quadrangle in the centre of the house, where they did admirably and still continue in the finest condition. Turning out to grass with cut wings is I find an excellent way of keeping many of the larger and hardier members of the parrot family. A pair of Roseate Cockatoos treated in this way have nested and reared their young, although the cock was a newly-imported bird and by no means tame. Cockatiels have twice laid eggs, which accidents prevented them from incubating, and many *Platycercine* parrakeets of different species have lived under similar conditions for several months in the best of health, and with a little encouragement would, I believe, have nested successfully. Small and delicate species, like the members of the *Neophema* family, do not thrive so well under this treatment, and there is great risk of enteritis when the removal of the flight feathers leaves the side exposed to the cold. The two Queens I kept together for some

weeks in a large outdoor cage and finally decided to reserve the one from Belgium as a mate for the old King, and to put the other with the cut-winged couple above mentioned. As I had often heard that Kings are absolutely indifferent to cold, I did not anticipate that she would thrive any less well than the two male birds, but it soon became evident that the treatment did not agree with her; for, although the weather was mild, she looked so obviously cold and unhappy that I foresaw her speedy demise if I persisted in the open-air treatment. I therefore caught her again and put her in a cage in a warm room, where she spent the remainder of the winter in good health. It is evident that Kings are only indifferent to cold when in really good plumage and condition, and it is unwise to turn them out of doors when newly-imported, unless the weather be really warm. There are, in fact, very few parrots able to withstand such Spartan treatment; Blue-bonnets can, and probably Quakers and Cockateels, and perhaps some Macaws; the rest must have heat, which after all is only natural when one considers the high temperature to which most are accustomed in their native haunts. All this time the old King—the sole survivor of the fever outbreak—had been leading a life of unfettered freedom. He spent most of his time in the company of some Port Lincolns, with whom he sometimes made expeditions of several miles, always, however, returning to roost. When February came round, the Queen from Belgium, now looking very well indeed, started calling persistently in her cage until she attracted the attention of her intended mate. He was much delighted at discovering her, visiting her constantly and performing various antics for her benefit.

The courtship of *Aprosmictus cyanopygius* is quite unlike that of most other Australian parrakeets and is very amusing to watch. The cock indulges in aimless hops and rushes in the immediate vicinity of the object of his affections, picking up bits of leaf or grass and throwing them about. Occasionally he sits down in front of the hen and moves his wings up and down a few times, and at frequent intervals stops and scratches his head violently as if he had forgotten something he wanted to say. The whole time the display is going on, the pupils of the eyes keep contracting and

expanding with excitement, and the plumage is drawn close to the body and never puffed out as in the case of a courting Broadtail.

After the King had been paying his addresses for several days and the lady had begun to show evident signs of appreciation, I thought that the time had come to release her, which I accordingly did, but not without considerable anxiety, for I feared she would repeat the wandering tactics of her predecessor. For two days, however, all went well. The pair were as happy as possible and the Queen showed no inclination to go off on her own account, but was content to follow her mate and let him show her the way about. But my ill-luck was not yet ended, and just when I was beginning to conjure up roseate visions of a nest of young Kings, the third day dawned—and no Queen! Her mate returned to the empty cage she had once occupied and called long and disconsolately, and I came to the conclusion that she must have wandered away and got lost or had met with some accident. A few hours later, however, I saw her on one of the feeding trays, but not, alas! the strong, healthy bird of the day before, but a sickly, miserable object. I caught her at once and put her in a warm room, imagining that she had caught a chill. In two days she was dead, and the *post mortem* revealed to my astonishment and disgust, not enteritis as I expected, but my old enemy septic fever! Apparently the wretched disease was still lurking in the garden, though for six months there had been no fresh case, and no new birds had been turned out to reintroduce the infection. The widowed King, after much fruitless calling, resigned himself once more to the unsatisfactory company of *Platycercines*, and some weeks after the death of his mate, astonished me by a most unexpected and talented display of mimicry. I happened to have bought a new hen Pennant, whose appearance made a favourable impression on the King, for I found him one day sitting on the top of the aviary indulging in his courting antics and calls. The Pennant, however, unused to such peculiar methods of wooing, remained unresponsive, and her suitor, apparently thinking that something more was required of him, suddenly began, to my great astonishment, to imitate with extraordinary accuracy the crooning and cackling of a flock of domestic poultry. How he had managed to acquire this accomplishment—for it certainly is acquired

and is not natural—I cannot say, nor do I know why he considered that the small-talk of fowls was an appropriate medium for expressing his devotion. He may perhaps have said to himself, “I have spent at least twenty minutes in addressing this lady with all the endearing epithets my language contains and she won’t pay the least attention. Possibly she does not understand what I am saying, I will therefore talk to her in the language of the birds of the country and see if *that* will make any impression upon her!” I have only once heard him going through his chicken performance since and, as on the first occasion, he used it as the final argument in a proposal of marriage. When the warm weather returned I again put the Queen with the cut-winged birds in the quadrangle and this time she did well enough. Her appearance caused great excitement and the three cocks spent most of the day displaying before her, biting her mildly from time to time to revive her interest, whenever they thought that she was allowing her attention to wander from their proceedings. The old cock, curiously enough, was driven away by both the cut-winged birds—whom one would have thought he could easily have mastered—and was obliged to keep at a respectful distance. Still he remained in the vicinity of the hen and, probably on account of her presence, underwent a great change of disposition. Ever since he first came to me he had been rather a shy bird and frequently would not allow one to get within thirty yards of him without taking alarm. Suddenly, however, his timidity vanished, and when one day I wished to drive him out of the quadrangle, where he had shown a disposition to bully some cockatiels and appeared likely to injure them, I found it impossible to make him go. He let me walk right up to him and hit him over the wings with my handkerchief, and even then only flew slowly round and returned to his original perch within three feet of me, regardless of my hostile demonstrations in his face. For quite ten minutes I pursued him, belabouring him as hard as I could without risk of really hurting him; at the end of that time I had thoroughly alarmed everything else in the place, except my friend the King, who was as cool as ever and as determined to remain. I retired defeated! Of late, however, he appears to have grown tired of the indifference of the Queen and the unfriendliness of her two

companions, for he has left them almost entirely and spends his time in the company of a cock Rosella with whom, for some reason, he has struck up a warm bachelor friendship.

In conclusion, I may perhaps give a word of warning to intending purchasers of King Parrakeets. As I have already said these birds are extremely liable to contract septic fever, therefore never get one which is thin or weak, it will only die and may infect your other stock. Be very careful also to examine the birds' eyes, and if they are dull or watery, have nothing to do with it. Kings are subject to one or two diseases of the eye, which almost invariably end in loss of sight, one form being characterized by a dilation of the cornea, another by a revelling of the eyelid, and, eventually, complete closing of the eyes; and these diseases are never developed by birds kept in clean healthy surroundings, but are started in the filthy travelling boxes and stock cages to which so many dealers consign their unfortunate stock.

If obtained in good condition, however, the King is easily kept, especially in an outdoor aviary. Wheat, oats, canary seed and a little hemp, with fruit, dandelion, lettuce, etc. being all that it requires in the way of food. When at liberty, Kings take a certain amount of insects and I have even seen mine eating lobjworms and dead (*very dead*) mice; but in captivity such extras are quite unnecessary and might prove harmful.

As an occupant of a mixed aviary a King does not shine, being of a bullying disposition and fond of attacking smaller and weaker birds. He is, however, very often a bit of a coward as well. Contrary to the popular belief, bullies—human or avian—are generally very courageous, but the King is an exception. On more than one occasion I have seen my old bird put to ignominious flight by a small hen Pennant, who was about the only other parrakeet who ever attempted to stand up to him. Moreover, while he enjoys nothing better than looking on at one of the indiscriminate mêlés in which the members of the broadtail family love to indulge during the winter months, he always takes good care to keep on the outskirts of the fray and cheer on the combatants from a respectful distance.

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## “AGRIPPA.”

By REGINALD P. WAUD.

It is with great pleasure, but with some diffidence, that, in response to the request of the Editor of the *Avicultural Magazine*, I am writing a short account of “*Agrippa*,” my long-legged bird (a white Stork) named after “*Tall Agrippa*,” out of Shockhead Peter, a book which gave me great pleasure in my childhood’s days.

*Agrippa* is a friend of five years standing. I bought him, chiefly, I think, in order to rescue him from the tiny pen in which he was being kept in a horribly dirty condition in a bird-shop in the East end of London, for I felt that he would be happier in my garden, where he stalks at will, and can, if so disposed, bathe in a little pond. He has a house to go to at night, to avoid the danger of the fox or very bad weather, and he quite realises that this house is his sanctuary, for every evening the door is opened and he retires and there remains undisturbed until the morning, when I go to let him out.

On his arrival he was very timid and nervous, but he soon became quite tame, and now, when one enters the garden and calls “*Agrippa*,” he comes up to take out of one’s hand any little dainty he can be offered, in the way of a piece of raw meat, fish, dead mouse, bird, or even rat, which are swallowed whole without the least inconvenience as far as can be gathered from his demeanour.

Whenever he sees one digging in the garden, it is interesting and amusing to watch him walk up to the place and stand over it, eyeing every spadefull of soil turned over in the hopes that a worm may appear, at which he immediately grabs.

On several occasions he has walked into the house with me, but is a little diffident, apparently being alarmed of meeting one of the dogs or a stranger, whom he really never quite trusts.

The bird hardly ever attempts to fly, and the only time I ever see him exercise his wings is in the morning when first let out, possibly that is because I keep a few of the feathers cut, usually cutting them in the autumn when the old ones have come out.

All the time I have had him, he has never done the least harm in the garden, I should rather say done good, for he devours all wire-worms, caterpillars, etc. he can see, with the greatest joy. His

only wickedness is, if ever a chicken happens to get into the garden it is always death to it, as he darts after it at once, and the chicken comes to a bad end.

I keep him well supplied with food in the winter, and he does not appear to mind the cold in the least. Agrippa has been a source of great pleasure and interest to me for the last five years and, I trust, will be for many more to come.

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## A SHORT RECORD OF MY DOVES' DOINGS,

WITH MENTION OF MY DWARF PARROT.

By CHARLOTTE IVENS.

As the heading of this brief article will infer, there is little I have to tell concerning my, at present, but small flock of doves.

Much as I love all birds, this group of the *Columbae* ever has been, and will remain, my favourite one. So that, as I have only space for, and time to attend to, a limited number of feathered pets, I prefer to keep to those I am most in sympathy with. Let me then write of some of the members of my little family.

Of course, the familiar but always delightful Barbary Doves have a prominent place among them, of which there are two pairs—one hen dating back to 1896. She was given to me at Strassburg (Germany) by an acquaintance, together with her original mate, both birds being at that time a year old or a little over. Since then, she came to England with me, was paired a second time (her mate having flown away), and now still bides with me in Portugal with her third mate, the second one dying in England. And this wonderful old bird, not only still continues to lay, but, since 1910, when I came over to Lisbon, has hatched and reared various young ones successfully. One is now just four weeks old and she is sitting again; surely a record I should say. She does not look her age, never having had either her nails or beak cut, nor does she need these operations. Her daughter, hatched in England, is paired to a fine young Portuguese Barbary named "Cheery," an appellation he well deserves.

Next comes my poor crippled Whitewing, with the joint of one wing cut or broken off, and a deformed beak with the upper and lower mandibles crossing each other after the manner of the Cross-bill. But he keeps in very fair condition, as besides grain I give him soft food daily, made up of yolk of hard-boiled egg and biscuit, moistened with a little water. Though he cannot fly he fights gallantly, despite his limitations, with "Cheery," who engages in battle with him on the floor of the aviary. Sometimes I let my poor Whitewing out in the garden where he struts about quite proudly.

The rest of my pets consist of six small foreign doves, not long since eight, but two that I had with me since 1904—a male Picui and a male Talpacoti—unluckily escaped about five months ago, to my great regret.

I remarked, with regard to the Talpacoti especially, that he improved greatly both in plumage and spirits since I brought him out here (Lisbon) and, curiously enough, his beak, which grew abnormally long whilst he was in England, and required pretty frequent clipping, never needed shortening since he came to this country. He became, too, a much bolder and livelier bird than under the dull skies of England. The change of climate does not seem to have made any sensible difference in the case of the Picui, or of my pair of Zebras, which thrive well in Hanwell and also equally well in Lisbon.

Since residing here, I have acquired two so-called Emerald Doves (*Chalcopelia afra* and *Chalcopelia chalcospila*), and one with sapphire blue marking on his wings instead of green, and with the tip of his beak bright coral red; a handsome bird.

Lastly, I have a male Harlequin Dove, apparently perfect in plumage, only with naked skin under his wings instead of feathers, unsightly when they are raised, but otherwise not noticeable, nor in any way affecting the bird's health.

By a strange coincidence, the male true Emerald has the same peculiarity, so that, instead of pairing him with my very lovely female, I have put him in a separate cage with his fellow sufferer, the Harlequin Dove.

The two fully adult cocks are fast friends, the Emerald even going to the length of frequently feeding his companion from his

beak, as all doves do with their young. It is always the Emerald who goes through this truly comical performance. The attention is never returned by the Harlequin, who feeds well by himself into the bargain. Furthermore, the Emerald fondles the head feathers of the other, evidently regarding him as his son. My bird-dealer tells me he has never seen a similar case between two cock birds.

I am sorry I have no breeding results to record, beyond those of the Barbary. I cannot spare either time or space enough to go in for this, but my doves seem quite happy without nests or nesting.

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In conclusion, I must give a short account of my *dwarf* African Parrot. His proportions are perfect, only he belongs to a diminutive species of his tribe, just as the human race of Pigmies in that same Continent do with regard to their fellow-beings.

His length, from the tip of his beak to the end of his tail, is  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches, but he gets so scared when I attempt to measure him with a ribbon yard-measure, that I cannot be very accurate on this point, otherwise he is very tame and lets me handle and play with him at will.

He is beautifully coloured. His back throughout a dark slaty grey, intermixed with olive green feathers; the shoulder-butts are goldfinch yellow: the breast checky black and bright green: the back, from under the wings to the base of the tail, of a most exquisite peacock blue in the centre, shading off to green on the sides and down his legs.\*; the inner part of the wings is fawn colour, excepting on the shoulder-butts, where the yellow overlaps the wings.

This parrot does not talk, but whistles; imitates the song of a canary, and "click-clicks" most imperiously when he fancies some fruit or other dainty from our table till his summons is attended to.

And now I think I have said all I have to say on the subject of my present experiences in bird-keeping. I should not have thought it worth while to record them, had not the Editor invited all the members of our Society to do so through the medium of our Magazine, each one thus adding his item to the knowledge we all strive after in the wonderful world of birds.

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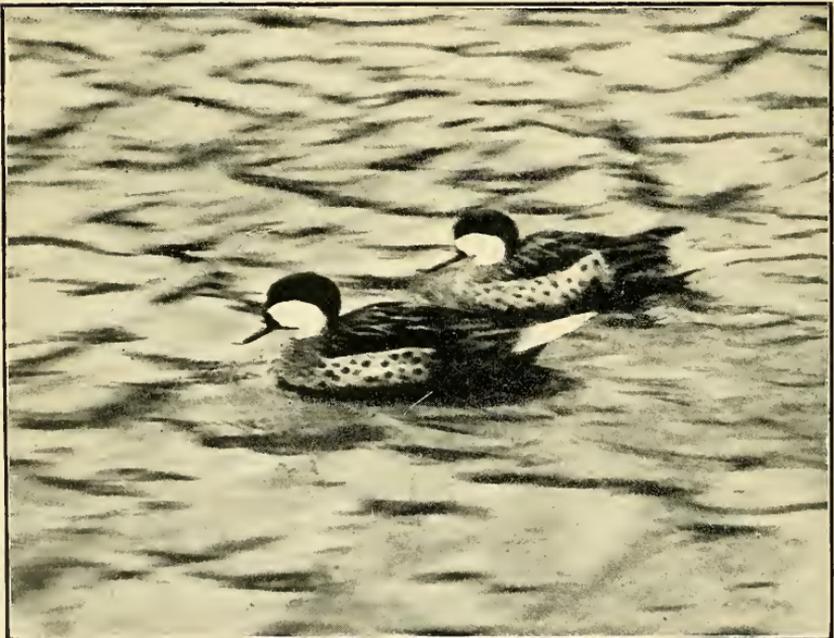
\* Apparently a Meyer's Parrot (*Pæocephalus meyeri*).





POCHARD. MALE.  
(AT PATSHULL)

Photo by Maurice Portal.



BAHAMA PINTAILS.  
(ON SIR EDWARD GREY'S POND AT FALLODEN.)

Photo by Maurice Portal.

## THE REARING OF YOUNG DUCKS.

By MAURICE PORTAL.

The weather, over which most unfortunately we have no control, plays an important part in the successful rearing of most fancy ducks.

Those who use incubators tell me that they find many a young duck is saved by being put back to warm up thoroughly, but my own experience has been that when attacked by cramp, the end is too sudden for any outside assistance. If the bird is merely starved with cold and wet, then the incubator drawer is excellent. Newly-hatched young ducks do not appear to take any harm if they do not feed for the first thirty-six hours after being put in the coop, and some species seem much more apt to refuse food at first than others, notably Carolina. There does not seem to be any certain road to success in making any young take to eating. This year I am trying putting a young call duck with each coop, at the suggestion of a friend. So far it seems to have answered well, as call ducks are greedy feeders and teach the others to come on.

It needs great patience to get an obstinate and self-willed brood to feed at first, and the more little tricks are tried the greater the success. Mr. Wormald advocates hanging small bits of the food on grass tips, as well as scattering it on the backs of young birds. I have also found vermicelli scalded and hung in threads on grass to be good; as it is white it catches the eye.

Ants' eggs, dried or fresh, are appreciated by all young ducks, and especially by Pochards and Tufted. I do not know if there is much feed in dried ants' eggs, but anyhow the birds like them. Maggots I have never used, but small worms nicely chopped up seem to agree with all young ducks, and if put amongst coarse sand and a little water the ducklings seem to thrive. Personally I use Duck Meal and egg five times a day at first, and give water in a very shallow tin lid not half an inch deep. Bread crumb and egg is used with advantage by some, especially in France, for Mandarins and Carolinas. Duck weed is appreciated by all young ducks, and I do not think too much can be given in the water. It is full of insect life, apart from being vegetable too, and is one would imagine almost a food in itself.

I notice most ducks are very fond of water shrimps, and when the birds are a month old and allowed deeper dishes, I give water shrimps and duck weed in tin trays, about 4ft. by 2ft. and 3in. deep, and the birds thrive.

Shell Ducks are fond of fish, and I used to give raw fish cut in strips twice a week when they were feathering, though I do not for a moment say it is necessary. Probably the most critical time with young ducks—after once they have started to feed well—is when they are feathering, as it is then that the greatest drain on their system takes place. If they do not feather well, I have found a little cod liver oil mixed with food a good thing.

If one gave all one's personal attention to the duck rearing, I think one would do better with incubators and foster mothers than with hens, as the latter vary so: a restless hen kills half her ducks, and many a hen takes a dislike to having a lot of wet ducklings rushing in under her or standing on her back. No doubt cross-bred Game-Silkie are the best mothers, but they do not cover many eggs. Bantams are always good, but so small that they get out of the coop bars, and the former objection applies still more to them.

After all, luck enters largely in the element of success, and some of one's friends find a certain species quite easy to rear while one fails signally at it oneself, though successful with another which others find hard.

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## A DAY IN A HAMPSHIRE GARDEN.

By PHILIP GOSSE.

How often it happens that one goes forth after much preparation to watch or look for some bird or other and returns empty; perhaps to find something of ornithological interest at one's very door step.

Being compelled to spend a day at home and to go no further than the boundaries of my small garden, on a day in June, the twenty-first to be concise, I could not help noticing how much that was interesting was taking place near at hand.

At breakfast—and being one of the lazy sort of bird-watchers

I leave the birds alone before—there were two insistent call notes : one the Corn-crake, the other the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

This Pigmy among the *Picidae* is always rather a conundrum with me, as each year in the early spring I can hear him “drumming” on a favourite dead tree half a mile away across the river. Then nothing more is seen or heard until one day in the month of June I hear his persistent “keek-keek” in the apple trees close to the house. Then, if one is patient and has a good pair of binoculars, one may discover the charming young family in the upper branches of an old apple tree or an elm, being fed by the parents. But where they nest I have never yet discovered.

A few days ago I watched one of the old birds in the usual apple tree, its beak full of insects, but was unable to trace it, much as I wished, to its nest-hole, though I rather suspected an old elm. To-day, hearing the familiar “keek-keek” for the first time, I knew that the young had left the home, and on going out to look for them, there they were, the young ones very difficult to see among the high branches of the elm tree.

It was like hearing the voice of a long-lost friend, when one hot afternoon in June of this year, a loud “crek-crek” rung out in the long grass by the tennis court. It then continued intermittently day and night, and even the dearest and oldest friend becomes a trifle wearisome when he repeats the same monotonous tale continually, as our Corn-crake does. Still it is good to have him back again with us after several years of absence.

Howard Saunders in his text book on British Birds says that the call of the Corn-crake can be imitated by rubbing one's thumb-nail rapidly along the teeth of a stiff comb, and that by doing this the Corn-crake may be made to approach quite close to the performer of the hair comb. So, lonely one moonlight night, I went forth with my comb and patiently imitated the voice of *Crex pratensis* for half an hour or more. But not a feather did the Land-rail seem to turn, in answer to my seductive comb-song ; so that, after ruining my thumb-nail and breaking half the teeth of my comb, I returned home, for the first time in my life having my faith a little shaken in Howard Saunders.

Finding that the Land-rail was almost always to be heard

each night calling in exactly the same spot, one apparently about twenty paces from the tennis court in some long grass, I decided to track him down. Again a lovely warm moonlight night and the rail in full voice, when I ventured forth through the high grass, stopping every few paces to play a few notes on my comb, making slowly towards the spot where I thought the bird would be.

When I eventually found my little friend I discovered that he was just one hundred and fifty yards away from where I started, and not twenty as I had judged. When I got within two paces of him, and he was still calling, I was surprised to hear what a tremendously loud voice he had. What I think the sound was most like is that made by one of those old-fashioned wooden burglar alarms or police rattles. It was quite overwhelming in its loudness and intensity. Suddenly he stopped and the most utter silence prevailed for perhaps several minutes: when I could stand the suspense and the midges no longer and took one step nearer, up got the rail, fluttering away a few yards to drop out of sight again in the long grass. By the time I had reached the house again "crek-crek" was ringing out, still apparently only twenty yards away.

Another summer visitor who has stopped to nest in the garden this year is the Lesser White-throat, Mr. Hudson's "better" white-throat. One spring morning he was there, singing from sunrise to sundown, up and down the hedge, hunting for insects and singing at the same time.

Eventually the pair nested low down in the hedge among some brambles; the cock ceasing to sing when the hen commenced to sit. In due time six little Lesser Whitethroats were successfully hatched out and the parents were kept busy finding insects to feed them with. All went well until a few days of the time when the young would be able to leave the nest, when, on going to pay them my usual morning visit, lo! the nest and young were gone and the bush pulled about.

It was a dreadful blow! I felt I had lost some dear friends; having watched the birds daily, during their courtship, building the nest, pairing, feeding and guarding their young, and all to end in



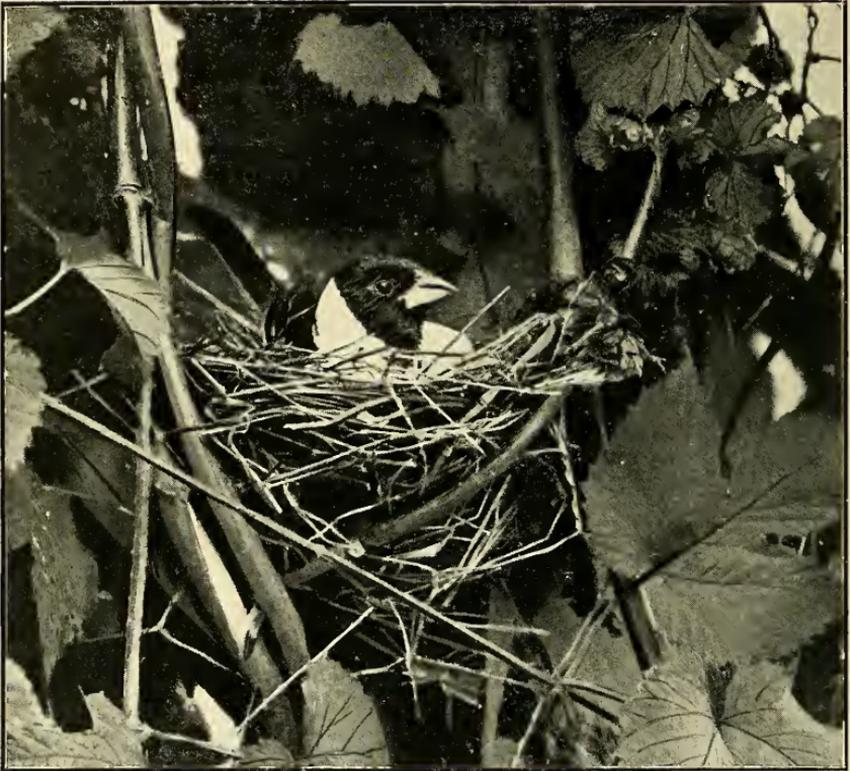


Photo by H. Willford.

POPE CARDINAL ON NEST.

(*Paroaria larrata.*)

this tragedy. I felt sure of the murderer: a vile, slinking black cat from the village.

At eight o'clock the same evening, at the other end of the hedge I found the male White-throat paying marked attentions to his lady, so hope that all may still be well with them.

An hour later, a shot rang out and a black murderer met his just sentence, and was given a felon's burial by moonlight, at the spot where a Lesser White-throat's nest had been.

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## MY NEW AVIARIES.

By MAURICE AMSLER.

The Editor having asked me for copy for the July number of the *Avicultural Magazine*, I propose keeping an old promise made to him of a short account of my new aviaries.

Last year, when I moved into a new house, all my old home-made aviaries had to be pulled down, and almost the whole of them, by dint of much thought and engineering, have been requisitioned in the construction of the new flights.

I do not think that anything in the present range of aviaries is either particularly new or startlingly striking, but I had nevertheless profited by experience in the building of the old flights, and this experience served me in good stead, and may prevent other beginners from making many mistakes in the construction of their bird-houses.

Whereas the old aviaries were gradually built with my own hands (there were seven including a bird-room), the new ones had to be erected in three months, and I was obliged to employ a couple of labourers for the heavy work, and also a carpenter for part of the time, acting myself chiefly as foreman and clerk of the works.

Quite at the beginning I was able to obtain a sound wooden shed, built of 4in. by 3in. quartering and feather-edge boards; it had a span roof which was in bad repair, and was 20ft. long by 18ft. broad and 15ft. with ridge. The ground at my disposal was a strip 54ft. long and 20ft. broad, and by planting the shed in the middle of this I was able to wire in two flights 18ft. by 20ft. at each side of the shed.

The two gable ends of the shed were first put up, ridge board and rafters followed, a large skylight was let in to each slope of the roof, which was then boarded and covered with "Stoniflore," a great improvement on tarred felt. The sides of the shelter shed were not boarded but glazed—the glass being stippled with white paint, which obviates the necessity of wire netting to protect the birds from injury—the shed being then divided, by means of 2in. by 2in. quartering and half-inch mesh wire, into four partitions, 10ft. by 9ft. Each of the partitions opens by means of a glazed door into an outside flight, 10ft. by 18ft., but in cold weather the doors can be kept shut and the birds allowed to fly in and out of the shelter through a small trap door placed above each door and worked by a cord and pulley.

The floor of the shelter is concreted, and each partition is provided with a 4in. by 4in. post, 3ft. high, on which is planted the feeding tray, thus the food is absolutely out of reach of mice.

The doors leading from one partition to another have each, in addition to a latch, a special spring, thus obviating an accidental "mix-up" of the birds should one be left unsecurely fastened.

The outside flights, 18ft. by 10ft., are 8ft. high and built of stout quartering and  $\frac{3}{4}$ in. mesh wire netting, this was an extravagance which I hoped would keep mice out, but so far I have failed signally in this, although the house is let 18in. into the ground.

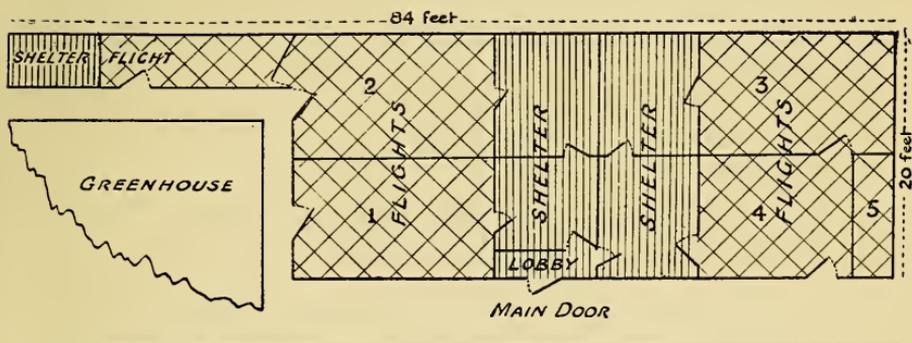
All birds prefer to roost rather high, and I have found that they can easily be induced to do so in the shelter, provided the shelter is higher than the flights, they are thus safe from storms, rain and cats. While on the latter subject, I might mention that I have fixed rectangular wire brackets, projecting two feet all round the tops of the flights, on which is stretched one inch mesh wire netting, this making the top of the aviary absolutely inaccessible to cats; by means of this contrivance, a rifle, and last, but not least, a bull terrier, I no longer have much trouble from *felis domesticus*. It is perfectly maddening to wake up in the middle of the night and hear your poor birds—some of which are perhaps sitting—dashing about in the dark, and, on looking out, to see the hated dark form of a cat crouching or careering about on the roof of the aviary.

Each of the flights is provided with a concrete bath, which is

fitted with a plug and an overflow connected with a "soakaway," and down pipes from the roof of the shelter keep the baths full and clean during rainy weather.

There is a concrete path running the length of each flight, which I find easy to keep clean, and on which I sprinkle tit-bits of seed, etc.; gravel paths on the other hand are liable to become very foul and cannot be used for this purpose.

The end of one of the flights is fitted with a movable frame fixed 3ft. from its end—this gives me a small aviary, 10ft. by 3ft. by 8ft. high (fig. 5 plan). There is also a long narrow flight (fig. 6) 30ft. by 4ft., which can be made continuous with Aviary No. 2 by opening a door; this aviary is provided with a small partly glazed shelter at the far end.



All doors opening from the garden into the flights push inwards and are 18 inches lower than the flights themselves; this greatly reduces the chances of a bird escaping when one is entering the aviaries; the main door into the shelter opens into a small lobby, built also with the idea of safety. Moreover, in hot weather, this door can be kept open.

The occupants of the aviaries are:—

No. I. Pairs of Golden-fronted Fruit-suckers and Blue-winged Sivas in the outer flights (both building). A pair of American Robins are shut into the shelter half of this aviary because they were inclined to the greenhouse. These birds are sitting.

- No. II. Pairs of Orange-headed Ground Thrush, Sikhim Siskins (2 pairs), Jacarini Finches, Ruficaudas, Nonpareil Buntings, Zebra Finches, etc. Several building.
- No. III. Pairs of Hooded Siskins, Blue-breasted Waxbills (sitting), Golden-breasted Waxbills (sitting), Gouldians, Fire-finches (sitting), Three-coloured Parrot Finches (building).
- No. IV. Pairs of Purple Sugar Birds, Yellow-winged Sugar Birds, Rainbow Buntings, Chukar Partridges.
- No. V. contains one pair of Great Tits with five young a fortnight old, of which more anon. They were wild-caught birds at the end of April, and now in June, when let out of the aviary into the garden, which I occasionally do, they follow me everywhere begging for mealworms for their family. The young are growing apace, and are now fourteen days old, so I shall soon be obliged to close the aviary door unless I am to find my chicks flown. I fear that, notwithstanding their tameness, nothing would bring the old birds back to their home once they had made off with their precious charge.

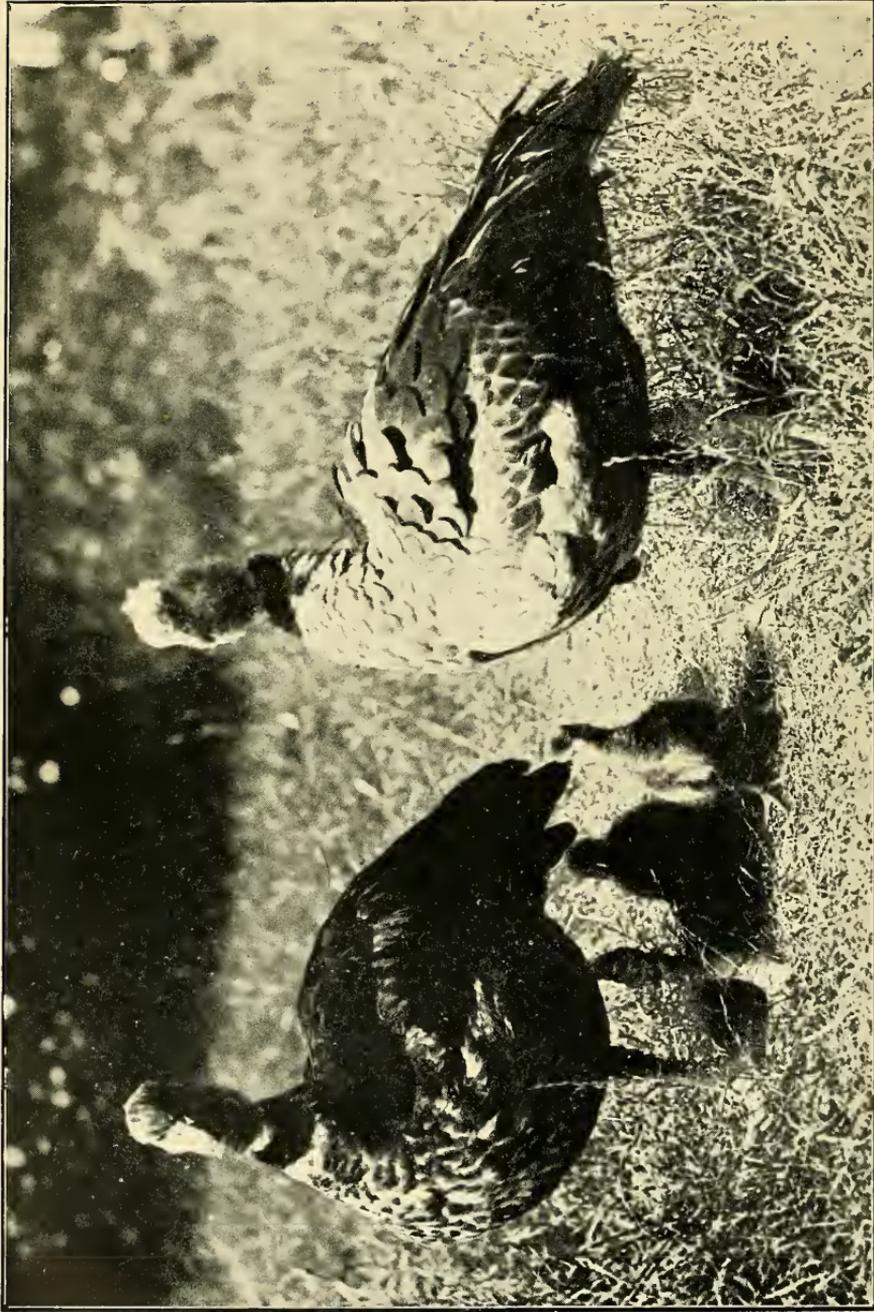
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## BIRD NOTES FROM THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

I don't know how the majority of aviculturists have done this year, but reports from several quarters seem to show that the season has not been at all a good one for breeding. At the Zoological Gardens we have had an extraordinary number of infertile eggs, in many cases from birds that have before proved themselves to be good breeders. A full-winged wigeon duck nests every year in one of the flower beds near the Three-island pond, generally bringing off a large brood of seven or nine. This year she sat well on nine eggs, but succeeded in hatching only two. A Paradise duck (*Tadorna variegata*) generally produces a good brood, but this year all her eggs except one proved clear. The pair of White-throated Ground Thrushes which reared three young birds last year, have so far had two nests, but the eggs have all been infertile. Now she is sitting again, and we hope for better success.





PAIR OF CRESTED SCREAMERS WITH THEIR TWO CHICKS  
AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, JULY, 1913.

D. Seth-Smith photo.

The old pair of Crested Screamers in the Great Aviary hatched three beautiful chicks, fluffy yellowish little birds much like young geese, with orange legs. But they brooded them too well, for they managed to smother one soon after hatching, and, since the accompanying photograph was taken, a second has met with a similar fate. This second youngster was a fine strong bird, but the pressure of its mother's enormous foot during the night simply transformed it into a flattened corpse. These extraordinary birds are so much like geese, feeding chiefly upon grass and other green food, that I should be much inclined another year, to transfer their eggs to the care of some steady old goose, who, I believe, would rear the chicks without any difficulty.

In the great Seagulls' Aviary the pair of White Storks nested as they did last year, hatching three young ones. Last year five were hatched, but all died. This year, however, I am glad to say the three young birds have been successfully reared and are now shifting for themselves in one of the paddocks of the Ostrich House.

The American Red-winged Starlings have a family of three which have left the nest. Bronze-wings, Crested and White-fronted doves all have young, and a pair of the little Spotted Tinamous have brought off three chicks.

A pair of Blue Water-hens (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) hatched off two chicks in the Great Aviary, but as they seemed inclined to neglect them, being much disturbed by the other birds in the enclosure, we took them and gave them to a small bantam to rear. They are exactly like the young Black-backed *Porphyrios* we have reared on several occasions, and most engaging little creatures, running to meet their keeper on his approach, and readily taking food from his hand.

Mexican Quails have a small brood of three or four chicks, and to-day (July 14th) the keeper discovered a hen Douglas Quail with a good brood of seven or eight. We thought she was sitting somewhere, but the nests of these quails are so very well concealed in the long grass that it is impossible to ascertain their whereabouts without running the risk of causing the bird to desert. They are generally approached through a long tunnel under the grass which is pulled down so as to completely conceal the nest. Another pair

of Douglas Quails nested in a more exposed situation, but the hen had an attack of "gapes" just as she was about to sit, so the eggs were placed in the incubator, and as I write one chick has hatched and the others are chipping. The hen was successfully treated and will probably lay again. These chicks will be placed in a Hearson's Foster Mother, in which we successfully reared six of the same kind last year.

Of new arrivals, we have lately received two nice young Boatbills of the northern form, *Canchroma zeledoni*, a species which appears to be new to the collection. It is to be hoped that they will do as well as the old bird of the southern form, *C. cochleria*, which has lived well for more than nine years.

The arrival of a second specimen of the Kagu and two Sun Bitterns are noteworthy, as both species are rare and most attractive forms. The old Kagu has lived in the Western Aviary since 1906 and been a constant source of interest to visitors. It is much to be hoped that the new arrival may prove to be of the opposite sex, but it is impossible at present to say to which sex either belong. The Sun Bittern is also a most delightful and beautiful bird which, years ago, bred several times in the Gardens. In recent years there have only been single individuals in the collection, but now that we have three there may be a chance of their nesting.

Mr. Goodfellow recently brought home from Chili a couple of the handsome Andean Geese (*Chloëphaga melanoptera*), and these have been purchased by the Zoological Society, forming a valuable addition to the fine series of waterfowl in the collection.\* Whether they are a true pair or not is at present uncertain.

Quite recently a gentleman brought home from Australia a pair of minute flower-peckers (*Dicæum hirundinaceum*) and presented them to the Society on behalf of Mr. Heumann of Sydney. They are no larger than Gold-crests, and their successful importation is a most creditable achievement. The Society has only once previously exhibited a *Dicæum*, namely in 1909, when Mr. Frost brought home an example of *D. ignicolle* for Sir William Ingram from the Aru Islands, which lived for just a year in the Small Bird House.

D. SETH-SMITH.

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[\* cf. *Avic. Mag.* March 1911 for illustration.]

## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &amp;c.

A NOTE ON THE NESTING OF WHOOPER SWANS,  
By the COUNTESS OF HAREWOOD.

“It may interest some of the readers of the Avicultural Magazine to know that a pair of Whooper Swans that we caught at Harewood last year have hatched two young ones.”

“A pair that we had before, bred two years running in 1903 and 1904. That pair unfortunately died, and although we have kept this species ever since, they have made no attempt to nest again until this year. We now have nine of these Swans.”

## NOTES FROM WOBURN ABBEY.

Young Emperor Geese were hatched out, but did not live. In spite of being in a very large enclosure where they could have found good grit, they ate fine sand which brought on enteritis.

Young Stanley Parrakeets were hatched in the grounds (the parents being at liberty) and brought up; and also Rosellas. A brood of Adelaide Parrakeets were in their nest at the beginning of July, and a second one of Barnards.

The Gang-Gang Cockatoos had apparently again deserted their eggs. It is curious that birds at liberty should take the trouble to nest and lay, and at the crucial moment give it all up. One wonders whether any interfering Owls disturbed them by night.

## NAME OF SERIN-FINCH.

SIR,—I was sold a bird the other day by Thorpe, of Worksop, as a female S. African Bullfinch, and the enclosed curious Latin names sent as likely to be one of them.

The bird is more like a Hawfinch in size and build, a hen Greenfinch coloured with green rump, dirty white streaks by eyes and under throat. Sings very well and is great friends with my Russian cock Bullfinch. I bought her to try and get a cross.

What is it likely to be? I enclose names as I got them.

(*Crilosagra chrysoopyga*).

(*Lohospisa croropygia*).

E. WARREN VERNON.

*The following reply has been sent to Mrs. Vernon.*

Your bird is certainly not *Crithagra chrysoopyga* (that being a synonym of *Serinus icterus*—The Green Singing-finch). As it comes from South Africa it is probably the male of *Serinus albigularis*—The White-throated Seed-eater, said to be an excellent songster. I have only had the female of this bird, which never uttered a note. The allied species *Serinus crocropygius* (*Poliospiza crocropygia* is a synonym) comes from South-Western Africa.

A. G. BUTLER.

## "FOR LOVE OF SCIENCE."

SIR,—I have read with much interest the various letters respecting my article under this heading, in the July No. of our Magazine and in *Le Chenil*. To my horror I discover that I have committed the unpardonable sin of not at once repudiating with scorn the evidence published in trade Reports touching the present method of obtaining Egret plumes in Venezuela. The truth is that I was so pleased to be assured, not only by French plumage collectors, but by His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Venezuela in a letter under date of January 14th, 1909, directed to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds\* (that the wholesale massacre of families in which we had (with the deepest horror and disgust) been taught to believe, as the sole method by which Egret's plumes were or could be collected, was no longer practised: that I thought it would please my grieved fellow-members of this Society to be told the joyful news.

Not having ever been out of Europe in this life, I do not pretend to any knowledge beyond what I read: however I need not enlarge upon this point, which was the last item touched upon in my article, but has been referred to as if it had been an obsession with me and had tintured my whole existence and all my writings, whereas—as I stated before—I *personally* object to see the mortal remains of birds, however beautiful, perched aloft upon women's hats. At the same time I do not for a moment admit that feathers, picked up after a moult from bushes in the sleeping quarters of birds (not out of the mud under deserted nests), must necessarily be either broken, frayed or soiled. I often pick up feathers in my comparatively small aviaries, after the moult of my birds, in absolutely perfect condition. If it is a deadly sin for me, when I am told that some crying evil has been remedied by very strict laws, to ask my friends to rejoice with me, I suppose I must be content to be a sinner and unrepentant; but it is not exactly pleasant, when I would do good, to be informed that evil is present with me.

Now I will cease to be feather-brained and revert to the commencement of my paper. Monsieur A. P. (I don't know the gentleman's patronymic) speaks of me as birdsnesting when a village infant and Mr. St. Quintin as a lad. I was not born in a country village but at Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, in June 1844, and I began to collect eggs in the Blean Woods near the village of Herne when staying in the neighbourhood with my wife in 1871. Belonging, as I then did to the Staff of our National Museum, I loved the natural sciences for their own sake and not for personal profit: the study of Natural History is rarely profitable.

As I never was a rabid collector, of course I agree perfectly with many of

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\* See "The Feather Trade, the case for the defence" pp. 30, 31. The London Chamber of Commerce (*Incorporated*) Oxford Court, Cannon Street, E.C., a booklet courteously sent to me by our friend Frank Finn, the well-known ornithologist. In all fairness this accumulated evidence ought to be carefully weighed by all bird-lovers.

Lord William Percy's remarks and his condemnation of the wholesale accumulation of rare eggs. I collected both nests and eggs with a definite object; and, no sooner was that object attained and my first book on Oölogy published than I ceased to add to my collection. Though nearly all my eggs were taken by myself in Kent, Norfolk, and Essex, I had a few given to me by friends; and others (which for all I cared may have been either British or foreign) I purchased, to represent the species in my series.

I always believed that I had some perception of humour, but for the life of me I fail to see anything comical in my suggestion that inbreeding weakens stock and, if persisted in, may tend to extinction of species: it certainly would be no laughing matter for the offspring produced, though one or two of my readers seem to have discovered a great deal of humour in it, I believe it to be an admitted fact that many bird families, unless forcibly broken up, keep within call of each other from the time when they leave the nest until the succeeding mating season (at any rate among resident species) and it has been unquestionably proved that steady inbreeding in birds tends to produce albinism, which undoubtedly is not a sign of a vigorous constitution.

At my time of life I assuredly do not desire to add many birds to my aviaries. If I could afford to pay a regular skilled attendant to look after them the case might be different; but, after many years, one grows weary of the monotony of daily preparing soft food and fruit for insectivorous species and supplying the many needs of a large living collection. I dare not trust the happiness and well-being of my family to ignorant and unskilled persons, therefore they live on year after year in perfect health and condition, and I perforce have to spare at least an hour each morning from the culture of flowers, which of late years I have returned to with fresh enthusiasm after many years of partial neglect of them.

At one time my collection of living birds numbered 250 individuals; now it totals about 40. In the past three years I have purchased just six quite cheap birds, all of which were brought to me: but though I neither desire nor intend to add to my own responsibilities, I do sympathize with our poorer members who would be glad to keep and perchance breed many of the beautiful things which I used to obtain at reasonable prices, but which excessive bird-protection has placed beyond their reach.

I never suggested that the species which had been well-nigh exterminated by farmers and others were British; in fact I was thinking of *Conuropsis carolinensis* and *Ectopistes migratorius*, both natives of the United States.

Cats!! I have always regarded these beasts as vermin; I was born with an inherent antipathy to them, as some persons to reptiles: now I love lizards; they are the only four-footed animals which I ever made great pets of, though at various times I have also kept axolotls, newts, frogs and I think a salamander, not to mention legless reptiles. We are not accountable for these likes and dislikes, they may have some connection with our own earlier history or that of our

ancestors and therefore have become instinctive. Unhappily cats seem naturally attracted to me, and sometimes jump into my lap when I am visiting friends to my great disgust.

There have been many prosecutions of unhappy persons caught with young birds in their possession; and, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, I am quite satisfied that if I had been caught with the rescued Wagtail in my possession by any zealous protectionist, I should have been dragged before a magistrate, fined, and the barely fledged youngster turned loose to die of hunger and cold, or be devoured by the first predacious creature which came across it; nor, if I had explained my motives in taking the bird home, should I have been believed.

The Wryneck is a single-brooded bird, and if we allow six eggs to a sitting, the hen cruelly plundered in 1872 and the year following was deprived each season of the equivalent of seven clutches, whereas under natural conditions only half a dozen eggs would probably have been laid. Where then is the want of logic in my remark that to take one sitting from such fertile creatures as birds, could have no injurious effect upon them?

I think these are the only points which need comment from me, but the Editor may surely congratulate himself upon the additional copy which my little article has brought him.\*

A. G. BUTLER.

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#### EGRET PLUMES.

SIR,—I had no intention of taking part in the discussion raised by Dr. Butler's letter in the June issue of the Magazine, but when recently reading Mr. Caspar Whitney's charming book, "The Flowing Road," published in 1912, I came across some authentic information on the subject of Egrets which, being first-hand, has an important bearing on the question and cannot fail to interest aviculturists. I make no apology, therefore, for quoting Mr. Whitney's own words:—"The father [of this family] in the summer season was a plume hunter, he told me, devoting his efforts almost entirely to Egrets, whose feathers he took to San Fernando de Apure to a milliner's agent, who assorted and forwarded them to New York. The last year had been a poor one for him; indeed for several seasons the general annual plume harvest had fallen far below the standard, because of the great and repeated yearly slaughter. He referred enthusiastically to the profits of the business, declaring he had in a few weeks' hunting made enough to keep him a year, and [that] one hundred birds in a single visit to a colony rookery [was] not unusual.

"Killing an Egret is as easy as killing chickens in the yard, he explained, because the birds return year after year to the same places to make their rookeries, which are closely occupied in great numbers, and because they are easy of approach during their breeding period, the only time when they wear the white nuptial plume . . . known to the millinery world as the aigrette. . . .

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[\* He does. ED.]

In reply to my particular query if moulted feathers are gathered, he answered that some such are used by the Indians for decorative purposes, but none of commercial value are ever found on the ground, the season of slaughter being while the birds are nesting, when the plumes are in full lustre and life. With the decrease of the Egret, or little white Heron, native gunners from San Fernando and Bolivar in the employ of the millinery interests are beginning to kill other birds of attractive plumage, which previously had been unmolested—several of the larger Herons, the Cranes, Spoonbills, Ibises being thus preyed upon. In short, he added, that the entire bird colony is becoming perceptibly reduced in numbers." (pp. 261-262).

Finally Mr. Whitney speaks of the Apure-Arauca delta, and the southern reaches of the Apure itself as "the Egret-shambles" (p. 263).

The passages quoted supply evidence, which may not be disregarded, *that Egrets and other birds carrying plumes of commercial value are decreasing in numbers and that moulted Egret plumes are valueless to the trade.* Further comment is superfluous.

R. I. POCKOCK.

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#### FOR LOVE OF BIRDS—AND SCIENCE.

SIR,—I see the subject of the indiscriminate capture and traffic in birds, and their condition in the dealers' shops, on which I dwelt in the May number of the Magazine, has not been taken up by members as I hoped it might have been, for it is a very real and great evil, and ought to appeal to the sense of justice for which England is famous. I would ask those who deprecate or deny the statements I make to examine into the matter for themselves, as I have done. To visit as many bird-shops as possible, not merely in London, and ascertain if the birds are kept in sanitary and humane conditions; and to be at the docks to see the birds arrive from abroad by millions, an increasing stream. By the side of this wholesale traffic and enormous waste of bird-life, the English bird-catcher and his hungry children sink into obscurity. I should, at the same time, be very sorry to let it be imagined that in the protest I make against the bird-shops in England I mean to "tar them all with the same brush." There are of course honest and intelligent dealers, who value and understand about their birds and do their utmost to keep them in health and cleanliness, but these, as I have said, are alas! quite in the minority, and they would be the first to deplore the existing state of things. Even they, if they keep a large stock of birds, must find it extremely difficult to give to each the attention and care it requires. Imagine the daily task of cleaning out such a multitude of bird-cages! Add to this the ornithological knowledge required to provide each bird with its proper food supply, and the work of supplying the food. The care to ensure freshness and the labour of seeing to all the different supplies—of egg-food and ants' eggs and mealworms and insect-food and the different kinds of grain. A small army of workers, busy the whole day long, would be needed to look after hundreds of birds! I have sometimes wondered if a properly organized bird-

market, under scientific supervision, might be possible, the capture of young and healthy birds restricted and properly carried out. It would probably be a boon to the honest dealer and ensure the acquisition of healthy birds, besides putting an end to this senseless traffic. It would be a benefit all round: to the aviculturist, the dealer, and the birds.

In *Le Chenil*, I see that the deplorable condition of affairs with regard to the indiscriminate capture and dealing, is contradicted as “une généralisation nullement justifiée,” and that “les oiseaux s’accomodent fort bien de la captivité pourvu qu’ils y trouvent les soins nécessaires.”

As an aviculturist, I fully endorse this last statement. Birds, given proper conditions and in kind hands, get to look upon their cages as home. But it is the *absence* of the “soins nécessaires” that constrains me to call attention to and deplore it! The dealers’ shops in France appear to be properly looked after, and the fact “qu’on établissee une inspection sanitaire pour les cages d’oiseaux” proves how much ahead of us the French are in such matters. I have never entered a French bird-dealer’s shop, but I have visited many in Germany, and have always been struck by the superiority of them to so many in England. The dealers are intelligent men and fond of their birds, and the cages are roomy and kept clean. Moreover, there do not appear to be, so far as I can judge, such thousands as there are in the London shops, and there is more variety. Such enormous numbers of little foreign and tropical birds are there in the latter—common enough, poor little things!—that dealers advertise them as “the usual rubbish,” and one can imagine their fate.

*Le Chenil* goes on to say “la meilleure épreuve qu’ils n’y souffrent pas, c’est qu’ils chantent.” . . . “et que leur plumage peut y être aussi brillant et soigné qu’à l’état libre.”

As to a bird singing in a cage, its song is surely in great measure—whether caged or free—a physical necessity for its lungs and throat, not solely an ebullition of joy. The poor Larks, jumping up and down unceasingly in their vain efforts to rise and soar, shriek with song. Is their’s an indication of joy and content? Is any bird’s melody poured forth in a tiny cage, when its eyes have been put out with hot wires *to make it sing better*, “une épreuve qu’ils n’y souffrent pas?”\* And as to the plumage, if this is as brilliant and well cared for as in the birds’ wild state, why do we not oftener see it in the dealers’ shops? The most common sight is that of once beautiful birds huddled up, shivering with fever, sick and miserable, and we are told “he’s a bit out of plumage now, the gas, you see; but he’ll be all right once he’s out of the shop.” Even birds in fair health are too often ragged and dirty in the shops. How is each one to bathe in clean water?

When we reflect that each bird is in itself a miracle of beauty and intelligence, for very love of Science we should no longer remain callous to the existing state of things.

KATHARINE CURREY.

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\* This is still done in *Italy*, but it is against the law of that land.—ED.

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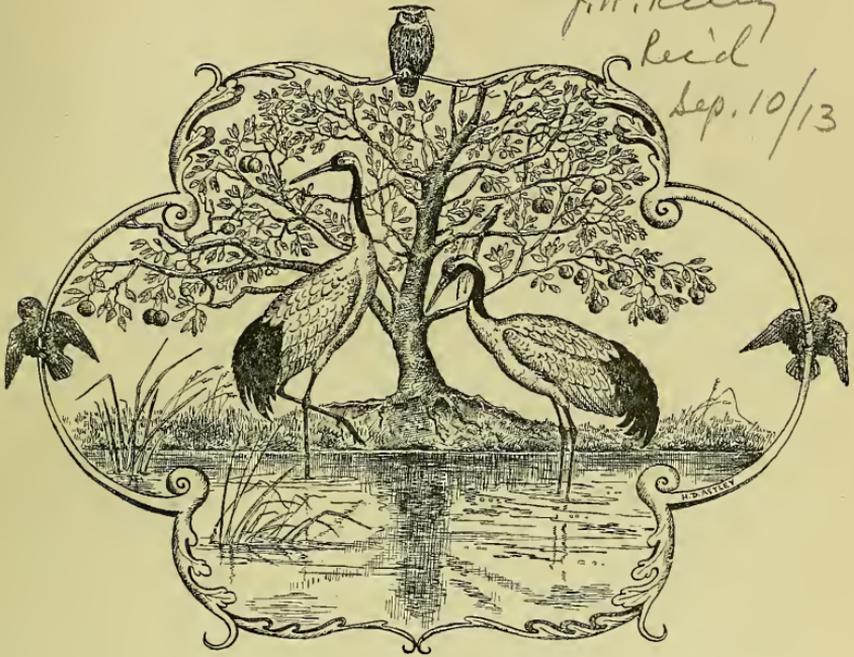
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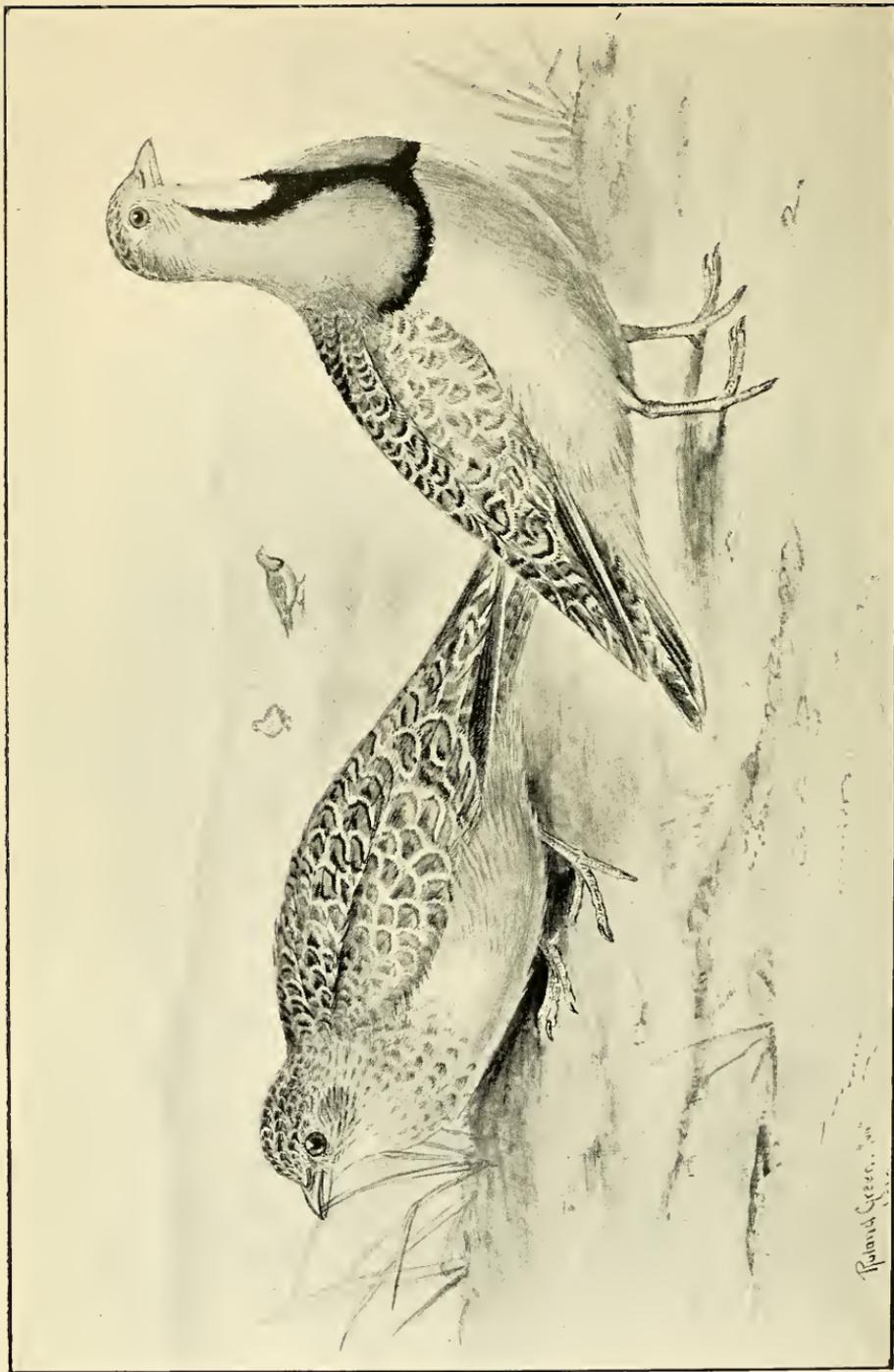
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SEED SNIPE (*Thinocorus rumicivorus*).

THE

# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

## AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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SEPT., 1913.

### THE SEED SNIPE.

*Thinocorus rumicivorus.*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

Mr. Goodfellow brought home from Chili, landing in the first week of July, some birds which were a puzzle to those who had never before seen them. Mrs. Johnstone very kindly invited me to go to Burrswood on the day after their arrival. Incidentally, the principal interest was not birds, but Chinchillas; which I preferred infinitely to see in their skins, rather than the latter made into muffs and boas, etc. As however, they are not birds, I must refrain from studying them too closely, at any rate in the Magazine; suffice it to say, they are most fascinating, and a pearly-grey coated Chinchilla, when tame, would make a charming pet. In a cage near by, I saw what at first sight looked like larks, but it reminded me of Lewis Carroll's line—"I looked again, and saw it was a hippopotamus"! but in this case, when I looked again, I saw a miniature bustard, of a lark's dimensions, and yet again, when one's eyes examined the wings, they were of the snipe order.

On the following day, I betook myself to Mr. Chubb at the Natural History Museum (Cromwell Road). "Seed Snipe" he said at once, and we proceeded to hunt out the skins. *Thinocorus rumicivorus* they turned out to be, inhabiting W. Peru, Bolivia, Chili, Patagonia and Argentina.

Imagine a bird the size of a sky-lark, with upper plumage of much the same colouring, running and stooping to the ground in a "larky" fashion, but with yellowish legs and feet small, and

looking as if they would scarcely sustain the weight of the body, after the bustard manner: only the Seed Snipe has a diminutive hind toe.

In the male, a blackish line runs down the centre of the breast, and forks out on either side. The female has a yellowish-brown breast, and in both sexes the underparts are white. There are the narrow, long, sharply-pointed wings of a snipe, with the plump body of a partridge, and the head of a lark.

In "Argentine Ornithology," Vol. II., p. 176 (Selater and Hudson), one finds that when alighting, the Seed Snipe drops its body directly upon the ground, and sits close like a goat-sucker; when rising, it rushes suddenly away with the wild hurried flight and sharp, scraping alarm-cry of a snipe.

These birds migrate northwards to the Pampas in the winter. They flock together in forties and fifties, keeping very close when flying, but are much scattered when on the ground, and reluctant to rise. If a person stands close to, or in the midst of a flock, they soon betray their presence by answering each other with a variety of notes, which seem to come from beneath the ground.

Mr. H. Durnford has recorded in the *Ibis* (1876, p. 164) that he found the Seed Snipe common in the neighbourhood of Buenos Ayres from May to September, and always in flocks, and that it seems equally fond of wet swamps and the dry campos. When disturbed, they fly round, uttering a low whistle, and invariably alighting head to wind. When in Central Patagonia, Mr. Durnford took eggs of this species at the end of October; and the young were running in the middle of November; but they probably have two or more broods in the season, for he found chicks in March.

The nest is a slight depression in the ground, sometimes lined with a few blades of grass; and before leaving it, the old bird covers up the eggs with little pieces of stick. The eggs are pale stone ground-colour, very thickly but finely speckled with light and dark chocolate markings; they have a polished appearance, and measure 1'3 × '8 inch. The chick is finely mottled all over with light and dark brown, having the beak pale horn-colour; legs, flesh-colour; iris, wood-brown.

This curious bird is most nearly allied in essential structure

to the Plovers. Only about six species are known. Mr. Goodfellow found them on bare and desolate districts in Central Chili, on high ground.

I have not yet put the pair that I took away with me from Burrswood in an outdoor aviary, but when I do, I feel sure I must clip their primaries on one side, or they would certainly fly suddenly up and kill themselves against a wire roof. In the bird-room, I let them run about the floor, where although inclined to take fright suddenly, they are as a rule quite tame. When kept in a cage they require a turf, or peat moss, for their small feet are apt to become clogged with sand.

The male bird at times uplifts his body and gives out a curious 'crow,' which sounds not unlike a wheel in some machinery, rapidly moving round and in need of oil.

Although in a wild state Seed Snipe are said to be graniverous, I find mine will greedily eat fresh ants' cocoons. They are also fond of green food, which is undoubtedly essential to their well-being. If they live through the winter, and they seem extremely healthy and easy to keep, it will be most interesting if they nest and breed later on.

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## NESTING OF THE WHITE WAGTAIL.

*Motacilla alba.*

By W. E. TESCHEMAKER.

I propose to curtail my notes on this most interesting species for several reasons, one of which is that I recently contributed to "Cage Birds" an article giving the fullest possible details of its habits both in captivity and in freedom, its migration routes, etc. To the migration routes mentioned in the above article, I may briefly add that our member, Major Perreau, has informed me that there is a vertical migration of this species in the Himalayas, the adults moving up to the higher altitudes to nest in spring and returning in autumn with their young. The migration routes of the species in North America should also have been worked out, but I do not wish to go into that matter now.

Perhaps those of our members who are beginners will better

realise what a dreadful waste of time may be involved in breeding some particular species, if I arrange these notes under the headings of the years that have elapsed since I took the matter in hand.

1906. In September of this year, I first saw an actual flock of White Wagtails on a sheltered beach in the Isle of Man, and was much delighted with their beauty and grace, but I had no apparatus for trapping.

1907. I took some traps to the Isle of Man, but the Wagtails were far too wary to enter the traps.

1908. I spent the last week of May, and the first week of June in the Island, and endeavoured to solve the question whether any pairs nested there. In September I took over clap-nets and a call-bird, but without success. In October I caught my first White Wagtail in Devonshire.

1909. I caught three White Wagtails in the Isle of Man, and kept them in an outdoor aviary through the winter.

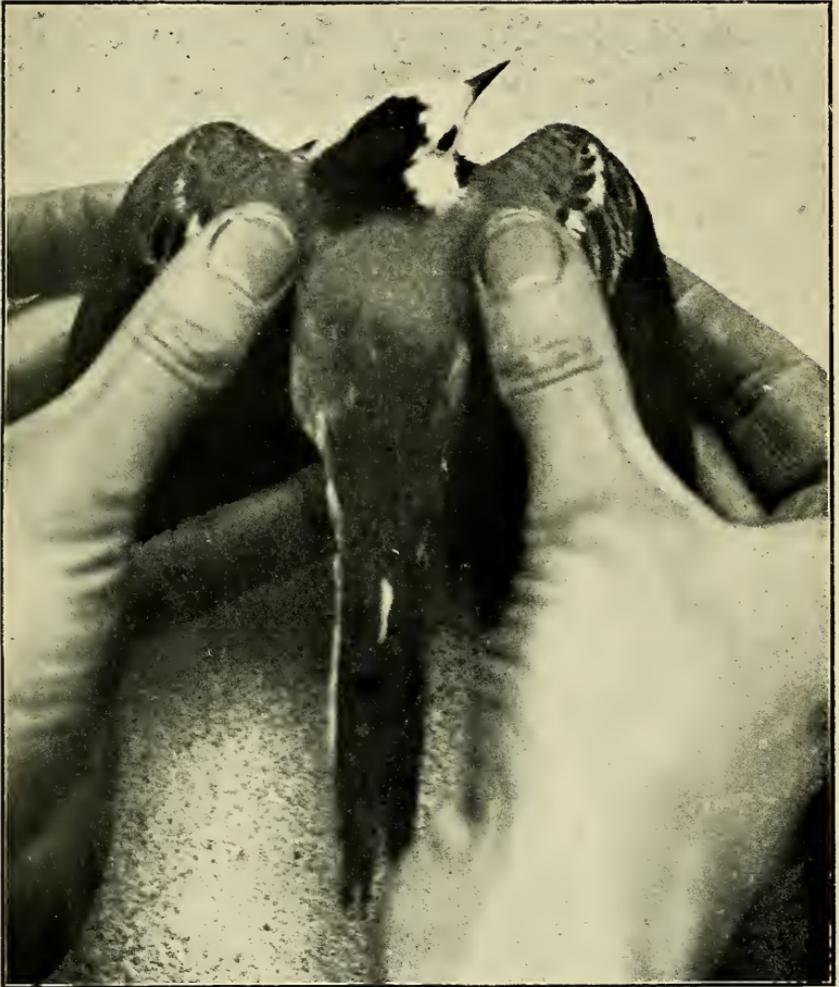
1910. In the summer of this year, I had a nest built and young hatched, but the old birds refused to feed with anything but moths, which they flushed by beating the grass with their wings. This made me think the attempt somewhat hopeless.

1911. I had three nests and three more failures. I released the Manx Wagtails (which presumably belonged to the race which breeds in the far North), and obtained a series from Germany. I applied a test to these, retaining one male and two females which showed some inclination to feed with the class of insect food which I had decided to use.

1912. I could not induce either female to nest. This species does not easily become reconciled to captivity, and requires much more careful management than the Pied Wagtail.

1913. I only used one hen this year, keeping the other in reserve. The spring moult took place between the 10th and the 28th February. (For a description of the moult and the characteristics which distinguish it from that of the Pied Wagtail, see my article in "Cage Birds"; the suggestions made there have been supported by later experience).

Towards the end of April, the male constructed a nest without assistance in a nest-box, eight feet from the ground. Court-



WHITE WAGTAIL.



ship commences with a curious mannerism: the male crouches directly in front of the female, facing her, and widely opens his beak. A little reflection will convince us that this curious pose (also adopted by the Blue-throated Warbler), is simply the attitude of a young bird asking to be fed, which sufficiently explains its origin (See Darwin on the origin of kissing).

The display is very characteristic and interesting. The female crouches on the ground with quivering wings and tail, and beak raised. The male standing sideways to her grovels on the ground, trailing his drooping wings; he then throws himself on that side which is farthest from the hen, the wing on this (the furthest) side drooped and quivering, the other wing raised perpendicularly and also quivering.

19th May. The female commenced to build in a nest-box (not the same one). 2nd June. Female commenced to sit. 4th June. When the female comes off the nest, the male takes her place; if he delays to do so, the female drives him to the nest. 13th June. Shells of two eggs carried out of nest. It is not possible to inspect the latter on account of its position in the nest-box, and the fact that the top of the latter is a fixture. 26th June. One fine young bird looking out of entrance hole. 27th June. Mr. A. G. Findeisen (a member of the F.B.C.) and myself watched two young birds fly from the nest, and saw one or more in the box. 30th June. One young bird helping itself from the receptacle containing live insect food.

5th July. Caught adults and young (four), and took second clutch of eggs (four) and two addled eggs of the first clutch (which therefore had originally consisted of six eggs).

I have no less than 18 eggs of this species, all laid in the aviary. They vary considerably, both in size and markings. The smallest egg measures 77mm. in longest diameter, and the largest 86mm. The majority are densely freckled with light grey, but some have a few purplish markings, and some a few pale brown spots.

ADULT PLUMAGE. The published descriptions of the adult and immature plumage which I have seen being somewhat meagre and even contradictory, I will add a brief description of a very fine male caught in Central Europe. Length barely 7" (Saunders says

7.50: a skin measurement probably). Wing 3.37" The tips of the longest secondary and longest primary are equidistant from the flexure. Tail 3.35" The margins of the lower and median coverts white, forming two conspicuous bars across the wing: beak, quills of flights and legs black; crown, nape, chin, throat and upper breast black; forehead and sides of face pure white, the patch extending backwards so far as to just barely divide the black area of the nape from that of the upper breast. Length of the breast patch from base of beak to base of patch 1.62" Back and rump a beautiful soft pearl grey. Underparts and under tail coverts pure white. Tail jet black, except the two outer rectrices on each side, which are white except the basal half.

Saunders and Coues describe the flights as "blackish," but this appears to be correct only as far as their outer margins are concerned; the primaries, except the first and second, are margined on the inner side, as to the lower half, with white (in the immature plumage with light grey), and the broad white margins of the secondaries are very conspicuous.

IMMATURE PLUMAGE (twenty-sixth day). Wing 3.25" Tail 2.50" The margins of the lower and median coverts as conspicuous as in the adults, but pale cream; the two outer rectrices on each side have less black on them than in the adults; flights as above; the second, third and fourth primaries have the outer web emarginated (the exact effect of this has not as yet, I think, been explained, but it must impart special characteristics to the flight, as witness the peculiar flight of the Tyrants, and the singular emargination of the inner web of the primaries of this group); beak dark horn colour; crown, nape and back grey, the feathers tipped with dull buff: Saunders describes the forehead as "white, tinged with yellow," but these young birds had the forehead grey like the back; sides of the face and the throat cream; surrounding the throat patch a crescent of blackish feathers of varying size and depth of colouring.

The young flew well immediately after leaving the nest, and their tails flickered in the characteristic manner of the adults.

9th July. Released the adults and two young, retaining two of the latter to settle a question connected with the spring moult. In the evening I was delighted to see old and young flying about the

estuary of the Teign in that state of freedom for which the Creator created them, and from which I had ruthlessly snatched them, with no better excuse than the fact that I had interested myself in the species.

GENERAL REMARKS. Recent experience has tended to support the conjecture, which I put forward in the above mentioned article, that the reason that this species does not nest in this country, is that its diet, and, in particular, the diet of the young, consists almost entirely of winged insects; although the Germans call it "Weisse Bachstelze" (White Brook-leg), we may note that it has not the same partiality for water and water-insects as its first cousin, the Pied Wagtail, and is often found breeding in dry districts, far from pond or stream. We also note incidentally that, although we have been recently told that "Blackstart *must* mean Blacktail," the abbreviation which those naughty German aviculturists have introduced ("Weisse Stelze") obviously does not mean "White-leg." Lastly let us note that the White Wagtail is the most difficult of the European Wagtails to domesticate: it is essentially a wild creature—a creature of the wild, nesting on some barren mountain side, by some remote Icelandic tarn, or on some lonely beach lapped by a northern sea.

P.S.—I have many photographs of the nesting of this species but the one selected, will, I hope, convey a suggestion to our friends, the ornithologists, that it is not necessary to destroy life in order to study the plumage of a bird, or to obtain a record of the same. My assistant might with great advantage have made better use of his nail-brush!

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## NESTING OF PURPLE SUNBIRDS IN CAPTIVITY.

By E. J. BROOK.

Just over two years ago I purchased from a London dealer what was admitted to be a job lot of Sunbirds. There were fourteen of them, and there were hardly feathers enough on the lot to decently clothe four birds, at least that is what they looked like. None could fly and so branches had to be placed on the floor of

their aviary. Two birds died soon after arrival, but nine out of this lot are still living. The birds were so bare of feathers that it was difficult to pick out the species at first, and, unfortunately they nearly all turned out to be hens, but there were two males of *C. zeylonica*, two males and one female of *C. asiaticus*, and the rest were females of *Zeylonica*.

These birds all lived fairly peacefully together in an aviary, 12ft. by 7ft., furnished with living bushes and orange trees, till this spring, when the strongest male Purple bird nearly killed the other male. A few minutes' observation was sufficient to show that I had a pair of Sunbirds wishing to nest, but what was to be done with the others? Risk or no risk, the mated pair must have the aviary to themselves, so the rest were promptly turned into another compartment among a mixed lot, composed of Sugarbirds, Hanging Parrakeets, &c., where they have done very well indeed. The mated pair of Purples soon set about looking for a suitable site for their nest. The horizontal part of a long spray from an orange tree was chosen, and to this the hen tried to fix some pieces of moss, but seemed to find the bark too smooth to get a foundation. Noticing her difficulty I twisted a little sheep's wool round the branch, and to this foundation she wove a considerable mass of wool and moss, but not finding it to her liking she pulled it all to pieces again. This she repeated three times. I then cut a small piece from the bough of a dead spruce fir and fastened it to the place the hen wanted to build from. Nest-building now began in earnest, and soon a mass of sheep's wool, looking like a large cobweb, was woven in and out of the small twigs of the spray of spruce. To this web was woven an untidy mass of wool and moss that hung down about six inches, the end of which was thick and bulbous and into which the true nest was presently built.

At this stage I noticed that the hen was restless and again threatened to undo her work. Seeing this and realising that if I did not help in some way there was every chance of no nest at all. I got some coir thatching cord, tied three lengths of about six inches each to the branch, and arranged them in such a way that they hung down with the mass of wool, touching it at three different places. It was most interesting to see how the hen immediately

took advantage of this, by weaving together the wool and the rough coir fibre. I have said that the true nest was built into the thick end of the hanging mass of wool. The hen made a small hollow where she desired to make her nest, which was entirely built of cocoanut fibre drawn from unravelled coir rope and lined with tow and a few feathers. A few straggling ends of fibre projected in an untidy fashion over the top of the nest and so formed a sort of canopy.

During the building of the nest, which was entirely done by the hen, the male bird paid surreptitious visits to see how things were going on but was quickly chased away by his mate. When the nest was finished, and even when the eggs were laid, he was permitted a moment or two now and then for the purpose of making a closer inspection, on which occasions he was allowed to perch on the side of the nest and look inside. After these inspections, surreptitious or otherwise, he always broke out into loud and beautiful song.

The eggs—two in number—are dull white, oval in shape, and heavily spotted with brown on the large end. The hen sat very steadily and never minded being looked at, but unfortunately the eggs were not fertile. One must hope for better luck next time, but the results obtained show that the breeding of Sunbirds is not out of reach.

A word on food is generally looked for in accounts about birds. My Sunbirds get the same as all my honey and pollen-eating birds now get, viz., unseasoned Marmite and Horlick's Malted Milk sweetened with sugar. The Horlick is made very thin and the two ingredients are given either mixed or separately. A little sponge cake is crumbled into the food and is well licked over, but I doubt if any is eaten. A certain amount of fruit is taken, especially soft apple and grapes. I have seen some of these birds that have access to insectivorous food picking that over, but do not know whether they eat any. Of course any small flies or blight are eaten greedily.

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## SOME NOTES ON *PAVO NIGRIPENNIS*. ETC.

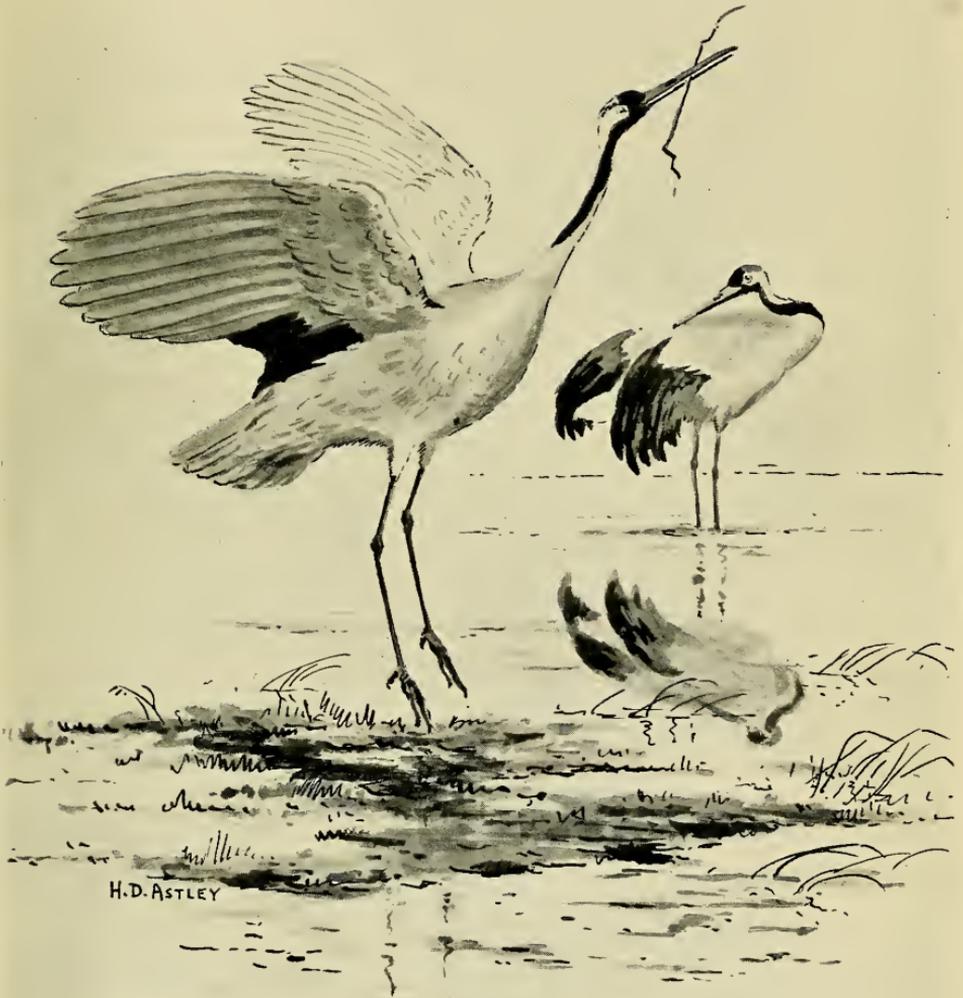
By F. E. BLAAUW, C.M.Z.S.

There is a mystery about a bird which however is familiar to many; I mean the Black-shouldered Peafowl (*Pavo nigripennis*). As is well known, there are two views about the origin of this bird. Some say that it is a good species with Cochin China as its habitat. Others maintain that it is only a variety of the common Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*) originated in English parks.

The matter being of some interest to me, I have kept peafowl of this kind in my park during the last twenty-four years, and I have bred great numbers every spring. My object was to see if Black-shouldered Peafowl would ever in any way throw back to the so-called original form of *Cristatus*, thereby proving their origin. I may as well say at once that this has never been the case.

Black-shouldered Peafowl have invariably bred true, but they have in some cases become variegated with white, and by selection I have at last obtained pure white specimens of the kind. Having satisfied myself that no amount of breeding would give me *Pavo cristatus* I tried the following experiment. I bought a pure white hen of the common *Pavo cristatus* and paired her with one of my Black-shouldered cocks that showed some white in its feathers. The result was four chicks which are adult now. They are two cocks and two hens, and are neither Black-shouldered nor white peafowl, but simply normally coloured *Pavo cristatus*. Now, if *Nigripennis* is only a sport of *Cristatus*, one would expect that a white sport of *Cristatus* would be the same thing as a white sport of *Nigripennis*. So that a normally coloured or variegated cock of *Nigripennis* paired with a white hen of *Cristatus* would breed the same thing with that hen, as it would breed with a white *Nigripennis* hen, that is either pure white birds or normally or variegated *Nigripennis* peafowl.

Now this is not the case. The influence of the white *Cristatus* hen is such that the result of the union is normally coloured *Cristatus* peafowl, which show no sign of the *Nigripennis* father. In the Zoological Gardens of London, Mr. Seth-Smith has informed me that the pairing of a normally coloured *Pavo cristatus*



A MANCHURIAN CRANE'S DANCE.



with a normally coloured *Pavo nigripennis* also resulted in a normally coloured *Pavo cristatus*.

If one crosses two good species of birds, however nearly related, I have always found that the chicks partake of the characteristics of *both* parents. I must, therefore, come to the conclusion that *Nigripennis* is a colour form of *Pavo cristatus*, in the same way as the Blue Snow Goose is only a colour phase of the White Snow Goose, and as I suppose the also mysterious dark form of the Golden Pheasant (*Thaumalea picta obscura*) is of the ordinary *Thaumalea picta*.

Two years ago, in the London Zoological Gardens, Mr. Seth-Smith bred chicks from a male *Pavo nigripennis* and a female *Pavo specifer*. Three of these hybrids, a cock and two hens, which I have in my park, have bred; although the cock has not yet grown his train. The result is three chicks, of which two are *pure white* and one exactly like a *Nigripennis* chick. I am very curious to see what will grow out of them, and whether they will in any way show their mixed origin.

“Gooilust,” June, 1913,

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## GLOSSY STARLINGS.

By GRAHAM RENSHAW, M.B.

The *Eulabetidæ*\* or Glossy Starlings are deservedly favourites with aviculturists; their intelligence, charming ways, and handsome plumage making them an acquisition to any collection. During the past ten years the writer has kept at least a dozen of these birds, besides noticing as many more in various European Zoos.

The Green Glossy Starling (*Lamprocolius chalybeus*) can usually be obtained for about a pound or so at a dealer's. Plumage lovely bluish green, shot with varying shades of purple; eye yellow or orange; legs and feet black. When in tight plumage the Green Glossy Starling appears as if composed of burnished metal, the glistening feathers being admirably set off by the bluish spots in the region of the ear and on the wings. In its quick alert movements,

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\* This family should be restricted to the Hill Mynah.—A.G.B.

this bird resembles the common English Starling; its song is composed of a number of harsh notes mingled with others of more melodious nature. A specimen which I saw in Amsterdam several years ago had a white feather on the breast.

Glossy Starlings soon become delightfully tame. In a few days a newly-purchased specimen will take a mealworm from the hand, or alight on one's finger. Several which I have had became almost a nuisance from their fearlessness, flying towards one as soon as the door was opened, and perching about in all kinds of situations. Often they scrambled right inside the large tin which held the mealworms, and stood stuffing themselves greedily, swallowing worm after worm in rapid succession. Earth worms were also taken, battered repeatedly against the ground, and then swallowed. Newly-born mice were also considered tit-bits, and disappeared in a twinkling down the red lane. These birds should not be trusted with weaker species, even of the same size. I have found them, for example, savage and untrustworthy towards smaller doves such as the Cape Masked Dove (*Æna capensis*).

Glossy Starlings are mischievous and fond of plaguing and bullying their companions if possible. Milder birds are seized by the tail and ignominiously pulled about, or the feathers are gradually pulled from their heads by the officious, teasing starling. Amongst themselves also a weak companion leads a sorry life, being violently pecked and otherwise maltreated. In two successive summers a pair which I had, amused themselves by gathering together dried grass, etc. This they conveyed into a corner, though they never made it into a proper nest. This species is fairly hardy and mine have all the year round access to the open air. In November they could be heard singing lustily out of doors, though the inner cage is kept heated during six months of the year.

The Long-tailed Glossy Starling (*Lamprotornis aeneus*) has always appeared to the writer much more delicate than the previous species. Out of many kept by him and seen in various collections only two or three appeared to be in perfect health: lung troubles, "going light," &c. always appear to carry them off. At Antwerp a little while ago I saw five of these birds exhibited in a large cage; their temper seems more quarrelsome and uncertain than that of

the green species. A fine Long-tailed Starling in the writer's possession was attacked soon after purchase by a cage-mate of the same species. Blows were delivered on the back of the skull, the beak of the aggressor being held closed and used like a pick-axe. The unfortunate bird was at once removed, but gradually became more and more drowsy, and died in a few weeks. With small birds the mode of attack is to jump bodily upon the victim, as if to crush the life out of him. Long-tailed Starlings employ a loud harsh screech as a warning-call, signalling the approach of a cat or other enemy. The song is not altogether unpleasing, and is delivered from a high perch or a lofty bough in the outdoor flight. These birds are imitative: my last Green Starling learnt to call like a cat.

Besides the two species mentioned there are many other "Green" and Long-tailed Glossy Starlings. All my own specimens throve well on bananas, mealworms, and German paste.

## SOME OF MY SUNBIRDS.

By ALFRED EZRA.

(Continued).

### THE HIMALAYAN RED YELLOW-BACK SUNBIRD.

(*Æthopyga seheriæ*).

This is a very beautiful bird, the general colour being blood red with a metallic green cap and metallic blue moustaches. Patch of yellow on lower back; wings dull dark brown; abdomen olive. It is about the size of the Amethyst-rumped Sunbird, but with a longer and pointed tail which is metallic bluish green. Has quite a pretty song but is pugnacious like all other Sunbirds. Rather delicate.

\* \* \*

AFRICAN.

### THE BLACK OR GREATER AMETHYST SUNBIRD.

(*Cinnyris amethystina*).

This is a hardy and vigorous bird, the general colour being a velvet black with metallic purple on shoulders, tail coverts and throat. The crown a bright metallic emerald green. About the size of a linnet; he is a very lively bird and easy to keep. Has a very loud song.

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## THE GREATER DOUBLE COLLARED SUNBIRD.

*(Cinnyris afer).*

A beautifully coloured bird and seems quite hardy but most pugnacious. Sings beautifully and most tame. Colour: head, neck and back intense metallic green; breast, brilliant scarlet, separated from the green throat by a band of metallic blue; underparts below breast, olive; wings and tail dull earth brown with yellow axillary tufts, and the upper tail coverts metallic blue. Rather a smaller bird than a linnet.

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## THE LESSER DOUBLE COLLARED SUNBIRD.

*(Cinnyris chalybeus).*

Very similar in colour to the Greater, with the green not so glittering and the red on the breast only half as wide. He is a smaller bird, being about the size of the Indian Amethyst and is beautifully shaped and very tame indeed. Sings very prettily. Hardy and easy to keep and they make delightful pets.

THE MALACHITE SUNBIRD. *(Nectarinia famosa).*

This is a much larger bird than any of the species described above and most elegant and graceful. General colour metallic green with black quills and bright yellow pectoral tufts. Abdomen glossed with blue; long tail with five inch central feathers. A very fine songster and seems quite hardy and a very charming pet, and to my mind the prettiest of all the Sunbirds I have seen. This bird loses the metallic colour after the breeding season.

All my Sunbirds are kept in separate cages in a bright room and seem very happy and well.

## BIRD FRIENDSHIP.

By KATHARINE CURREY.

Two birds—of, very different species!—have claimed a nearer acquaintance with us, a domestic cock (a white Leghorn), and a Thrush. Every morning at cock crow, Chanticleer proclaims the hour by crowing in the garden, which he enters by flying over a gate. He walks round and then returns to the poultry yard. After breakfast, he appears again at the garden-door, crowing to announce himself and demanding his breakfast. He stands on the door-sill



GOLDEN CRESTED WREN AND NEST.

Photo by H. Willford.



and peers up to the dish that is ready on the table, then trots after the bearer of the dish like a little dog. The presence of a collie does not disconcert him in the least, for if 'Bruce' joins the party to the fowl-yard, the cock merely steps aside to let him go first. No more is seen of this strange fowl till the afternoon, when, always about 4.30, he appears in the verandah and crows loudly, rushing round to the garden door to see if the corn-bowl is likely to appear. He escorts the bearer of it to the place where the corn is kept, peers in to make sure that the bin really is being attacked, then rushes off to a gate leading to the poultry yard, and calls the hens. He really is what a Scotchman would call 'a proper nuisance,' but who could hunt him away? He has just had a fierce battle.

The Thrush began to come up to the verandah when first he had a nest and young ones in a yew hedge across the lawn, no doubt hoping for mealworms which he watched the caged birds being supplied with. From the verandah, he ventured into the house one day by the garden door, and hopped along a passage into the entrance hall, and across it into a room, taking no notice of the collie who is always about. He comes now regularly at tea-time for cake and bread and butter, and now the young Thrushes rush up to us in the garden, taught to beg, no doubt, like the gipsy children!

The garden abounds with Thrushes, one with half the wing white. I have vainly tried to tame a pair of Blackbirds, but beyond building a nest and hatching out young ones low down in a creeper, quite close to the garden door, they do not honour us with their presence.

Our most faithful wild bird friends are the pair of Robins which fly in and out of the house all the year round; and, during the nursery days of their young, 'Tee-weekie-wee' and mate have sat on the top of the open window of the dining-room consulting evidently as to the quality of the food they have helped themselves to on the breakfast or lunch table. At breakfast, one at a time flies in and perches on the ham or other dainties on the sideboard, or digs its beak into the butter, always with the greatest boldness while Prayers are going on and it knows it will not be disturbed. They know their way about the house, and where the currants are kept for the house-birds, and they follow us about the garden.

## “WILLIE WINKIE.”

By ELIZABETH HORSBRUGH.

“Willie Winkie” is a Java Sparrow and therefore worth eightpence, wholesale market price. His price to us is not to be counted, either in pence, shillings, or pounds sterling.

His history is lost in the tides of Calcutta Harbour. When my husband’s collection of Indian birds started on its homeward voyage from Calcutta to Southampton, there was seen in the rigging of the “Königin der Nederlanden” a little grey-coated bird with a black head and tail, white ear patches, red beak and pink legs, his breast a soft dove colour. Only a Java Sparrow!

The collection was safely on board. Cage upon cage of costly Sunbirds, Shamias, Minivets, Woodpeckers, Orioles, Flower-peckers, etc.; many of them new to English aviculture, and any one of them worth the weight in gold of the little grey man hopping gaily on the rigging. A passenger looked up and saw him, and turned to the collector, who had worked tirelessly for months to gather this collection and who was taking a moment’s breathing space. His valuable birds were housed safely on board, and the labour of months close to his hand, with only the journey home before him—difficult enough, and implying much work it is true—but the birds *were there*, and granted the care and attention, the rest was on the knees of the gods. “One of your birds is loose!” the passenger called to him. Not for nothing has he collected birds all over India, in Aru—New Guinea, in British Guiana, in Trinidad. Where the Sparrow came from he did not know, but he guessed him to be tame and he had a spare cage. “Hold out your finger and call him down” he said to a lady standing by. The finger was held out and down came our “Winkie,” and before he knew what had happened, he was inside a little wooden cage, and his liberty was gone. What went on inside his little black and white head during the long journey home we cannot tell.

At Genoa, Mr. Astley and my husband met the ship, and some of the rarer and the more delicate birds were removed, either to be brought to England overland, or to find a resting place at Mr. Astley’s villa on the Lake of Como. The ship

was late in arriving at Genoa, and it was already dusk. The interest lay in the Sunbirds, and the rare Woodpeckers and Flycatchers. Time was short, for the ship was to sail again at nine o'clock that night. “Why in the world did you bring this rubbish home?” asked my husband, standing beside the cage where “Winkie” hopped and chattered on his perch, the walls of his prison close on every side, the roof above him close down to the little black head. The struck match had wakened him from a forlorn sleep, and he jumped up and down, up and down, in his narrow cell, for pure good fellowship. His story, such as it is, was told, passed over, and forgotten in the greater interest of rare and precious birds that were examined and appraised in the dim light.

Ten days later, my husband met the ship at Southampton. There was a good deal to see to. The few deaths to record and regret, the Customs House officials to placate, the specially engaged guard's van to load up, and all the way to town the birds to feed and water, and experiences to relate and to hear.

Small wonder that a worthless little Java Sparrow, who fed on seed, and needed no patent foods, and no milk and honey to revive him, was as one who had never existed.

Two or three days later, I came into the sitting room in our hotel in London, just at the psychological moment when my husband stood over the small wooden cage and lifted the sliding door that let the grey man free.

I have no expert knowledge of birds whatsoever, but I have a certain working knowledge, gained in the dark depths of ignorance, including the intimate acquaintance of many birds whose Latin names are unknown to me, but whose personal characteristics are known and understood as those of friends. “Mary” and “John,” our tame Blue Knorhaan of Bloemfontein days, taught me much, and the rearing of young and ever hungry South African Mountain Chats—and our friend the “Dravelkie” (I believe he is called a “Double-banded Courser)—all these, and many, many others helped to educate me ever so slightly in the care and handling of birds.

As I write, I seem to be again in Bloemfontein, high up on Naval Hill—and playing bridge at night in the hot weather. All the doors and windows of the big living room thrown open to the

wonderful African night,—the ceaseless “panging” of heavy beetle bodies against the fly-screens, the scent of flowers mingled with the acrid odour of the earth of Africa—and from the darkness without, the melancholy whistle of my Dravelkie dominating the night. Those who played with us will remember.

And I let my Dravelkie out one miserable day, and because of a forgotten open door, we very nearly lost him for ever. Luck was with me that time, and the “Dravel” came home with us, and lived for many a day. But I have had a fear of open doors for my bird friends ever since.

And so, on that morning early in May, when I came into the sitting room, just as the little grey man poked his head out of his prison cage, and gave one mighty dash for freedom, and flew circling and chirping above our heads—I confess that my heart was in my mouth, and I felt sure that whoever the stranger might be, we should never catch him again. And the next minute he was on my shoulder, dancing his little one step to his own particular “Robert E. Lee!” From that moment “Winkie” became a personage.

I have seen tame birds, and very tame birds, and “absurdly” tame birds, but never, never have I met with the equivalent *kind* of tameness which is “Winkie’s.” It is not that he *will* come to you. It is that he will *not* stay away from you. He is obsessed with a love of human beings, and of them he has no fear whatsoever. He is afraid of dogs, but man is his brother and his friend, and without him, life would be a wilderness. I do not know how he would behave if he had a wife; his own image in the looking glass sets him wild with rage, and he wastes a great deal of time and bad language pecking at his own likeness. He has intense likes and dislikes, and very ill-founded they are! My maid gives him food and water, and tidies his cage daily. She takes him into her room when we go out, that he may not be lonely, and she is more than kind to him. He hates her! If he is flying loose, he goes for her like a vicious dog, and with a very angry note he bites her hands. Dance for her? Not he! Answer her when she talks to him? Certainly not! Nibble gently at a finger placed between the bars of his cage? Not at all!—bite it and swear horribly instead! My husband offended him deeply a few days after his arrival. For some reason

of his own he did not wish to come out of his cage at the exact moment that the door was opened. The liberty was taken of removing him,—more or less head foremost. Again, for reasons of his own—(not carried to any logical conclusion, as I can do anything with him)—this wounded him in his inmost feelings. Perhaps he thought the acquaintance not far enough advanced to warrant such familiarity.

Be it as it may,—the result remains in a relentlessly vindictive attitude on his part. He has been treated with respect and with the courtesy due from man to man ever since. He has been courted; he has been cajoled. The result is nil! He will not make it up. He will not be friendly, and he *will* bite and worry the outstretched hand of friendship until, perforce, it is withdrawn.

We went off to Devonshire for a ten days motor trip, but on our return, we found him just the same pugnacious little fury to one of us, and the same gentle little friend to the other. I have done nothing to make him like me, and it is always my task to put his gently protesting little body back into its cage when we feel we really must have the windows open again! Frankly, I am flattered at the attentions of this feathered scrap of creation; but a nice sense of the proportion of things is borne in upon me when I realize that I share his affections with the hotel waiters. Hotel waiters are his dearest friends, although he has also a weakness for early morning housemaids. For these, he dances unbidden his very best steps, and sings his cheeriest song.

But the *waiters*! Let the door open and a heavily laden tea tray appear, followed by the bearer thereof—and at the instant “Winkie” has flown from my shoulder, straight as a die, to the well oiled locks so tempting to his funny little soul, and is dancing, dancing, dancing and singing his heart out in greeting. Carry a slippery tea tray, over balanced by a tall hot-water jug, and try to duck the onslaught of a little grey arrow shot upon you like a bolt from the blue! The effect is disastrous; and despite my now instinctive dive across the room with outstretched finger, calamities too agitating to relate have occurred more than once.

“Winkie” is curiosity personified. Everything in the room must be investigated, and the heavy curtains at the windows falling

in fat folds to the floor, provide interesting nooks for a sparrow far from home. A newspaper thrown on the table and forming a tunnel is a thing to be looked into very carefully, and native caution causes much time to be wasted before the exploration is complete. Not that he is afraid!—but it is all part of the game, and part too of the morning curriculum, which includes surreptitious dashes at the fiend in the looking glass, hasty return trips to my shoulder, and the invariable unprovoked attacks upon his master.

In the evenings, if we are playing piquet, he sits on my wrist and scrambles up and down it to keep his balance, with occasional excursions on to the table, and possibly a sudden dive at his enemy's fingers. Sometimes an annoying interest in the cards themselves is displayed. Shuffling always makes him swear. If there is one thing "Winkie" hates above all others, it is to be left alone. He is discourteous enough to consider his master's presence as 'non est,' and if I can get to the door unnoticed (which rarely happens), he beats up and down it with much flapping of wings until I return.

But "Winkie" at his very nicest is "Winkie" asleep, his cage turned to the wall; and in answer to my voice, and no other, there comes the faintest far off little whimper of content, like a dog whining under his breath.

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## A BIRD YARN FROM THE SEA

By Miss A. HUTCHINSON.

On the 6th January of this year 1913, I sailed from Naples to Natal, South Africa, *via* the East Coast; a far more interesting route than from Southampton round the Cape, for, as the ship keeps fairly near land most of the way, the chance of seeing something of the tropical bird-life both of the sea and land, is much greater than when travelling right out at sea.

All through the Suez Canal we were followed by small white and brownish gulls, which seemed to me to be exactly like the pretty little Mouettes (as the Swiss call them) which haunt the Lake of Geneva all the summer and winter, but, with the exception of a few which remain all the year, migrate somewhere else to nest. I should so much like to know where they go, but have never found anybody

there who can tell me.\* About July, back they come, and once more the air is alive with their voices, asking for the tit-bit from the paper bags which people bring down to the Lake to feed them with. In winter they get especially tame, and will take bread from your hand, but what they like best is to catch it in the air when it is tossed up to them.

But to return to the East. I had hoped to see Flamingoes on the banks of the canal, but evidently it was not the season for them, for there were none to be seen. At Aden there was a great variety of grey and brown gulls, some of them particularly large and powerful. At every port we stopped at after that, the ship was immediately surrounded by big brown Kites, so tame that you could almost catch them as they swooped about after the bits and scraps of food and refuse thrown from the galley, pouncing on the water and sweeping up again with something very enjoyable in one claw which was hurriedly eaten in mid-air. These, again, looked to me exactly like the big brown Hawks which fish in pairs on the Lake of Geneva. †

As we passed the Island of Darlak, I saw a very handsome bird skimming over the waves, and from what I could judge, he might have been about the size of a large duck, black on the back and wings (which were very pointed) and pure white underneath, a very short tail, and a large white beak. Could he have been one of the divers? Another bird which interested me very much was a large fishing eagle, which kept flying to and from the bush at Mombasa. He was very handsome with his gleaming white breast and head and black wings and tail. "Them billy-kites," as the old quarter-master called them, did not at all see the fun of it fishing in their waters, for I saw two of them chasing it back to the bush, but, nothing daunted, back it came again and even sat for a moment on the rigging and defied them all.

We were anchored off Mombasa for ten days, so took the opportunity of going for an hour's run by train to Mazeras, through

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\* The Black-headed Gull resorts to marshes and meres for the breeding season, in more northerly regions.—ED.

† They are Kites. These birds appear regularly on the Italian Lakes in the springtime.—ED.

the cocoa nut and rubber plantations, and I must not forget to mention the three bright scarlet birds, about the size of Magpies, which I saw, flying together in the bush; the flight was something like that of a pigeon. I am sorry to say that I am very ignorant of the names of the tropical birds found on the East African coast, and would have been so glad to have had somebody with me who knew them. Most of our passengers were coming out for big game shooting and seemed to know very little about the birds.

The reason for sending to the Magazine this little account of my voyage to Natal—which I expect has been made by many of the members of our Avicultural Society—was to tell of a bird incident which happened when we were in the middle of the Red Sea. I had just finished dressing for dinner, and was sitting up in the writing room, when suddenly there was a whirr of wings and a large bird flopped on to the floor almost at my feet; it had evidently been dazzled by the light, and had dashed through the opening from the deck into the room which was just at the top of the companion above the dining saloon. It was so dazed that it allowed me to pick it up gently, and was quite passive while I examined it carefully to see if it was hurt and also to see what kind of bird it was; luckily it was uninjured. I took it to be a very beautiful specimen of the Common Tropic Bird, which I suppose is of the family of Terns, judging by its two long white tail feathers, and I think I was right, for it exactly answered to the description of one in E. J. Detmold's "Book of Baby Birds," which, by the bye is a book worth having, if only for the illustrations, which are beautifully done. Detmold says "In appearance, the Tropic Bird is something like a Gull or one of the larger Terns. He has a strong pointed bill, nearly arched; his plumage is of a satiny white with curved lines on the back, while a few of his feathers are black, tipped with white. The four toes are joined by a web, and his flight is more like that of a duck, since he gives constant and rapid strokes of the wing. He is able to soar without resting for longer than almost any other sea bird, and it is said that he can pass whole days in the air without needing to settle. He is a great favourite with the sailors who give him the name of Boatswain on account of his shrill whistle. The Tropic Bird builds no nest, but lays a single egg, generally in

the crevice of some cliff. He is to be found in all the oceans within the tropics, and is about the size of a partridge, but his long tail feathers make him appear larger. Another kind of Tropic Bird is the yellow billed one—plumage apricot colour. Another is the Roseate Red-tailed Tropic Bird, larger than the others.”

My bird was evidently the common one: he had a stretch of wing just over two feet, an orange coloured beak of two inches long; his legs were yellow and short and his feet were small and black, rather wider than long, with short webs, answering to the description in the book; the two long swallow-like tail feathers, measuring six inches in length were pure white. He was in perfect condition as could be seen by his large lustrous dark brown eyes, and the beautiful satin sheen on his perfectly smooth plumage. He caused great excitement among some members of the shooting party who wished for his skin, and declared that I ought to give him up as he was such a beautiful specimen; in fact, so determined was one man to get hold of the bird somehow that I had to smuggle him down into the cabin, and keep him safely tied down in a big basket lent to me by the chief steward. I had told them all that nothing should induce me to give him up to be killed, but that I meant to let him fly the next morning, as it was then much too dark to put him overboard, especially as he still seemed a bit stunned from his headlong flight into the lighted ship.

The next morning I found him quite lively in the basket and took him up to the boat deck, as some of them were very anxious to photograph him, and it was nice and quiet up there. We made an impromptu back ground of a black coat which we hung up, and he was as good as gold while I held him against it, his portrait being taken by no less than five cameras. Afterwards he was carefully examined and measured, which ordeal he stood splendidly. Then came his reward! I took him to the side of the ship, and with a sweep of the wings he was gone, but just as he started he gave himself a great shake as though to make sure he was really free. I and two friends—bird-lovers like myself—watched him for some minutes flying low over the crested waves like a big white swallow, till he became hardly distinguishable from the foam, and finally disappeared from view into the vast expanse of the ocean.

## THE SOCIETY'S MEDAL

A Medal is due to Dr. Maurice Amsler for breeding the Great Titmouse in his aviaries, unless a previous instance is known to any aviculturist. For detailed description we would refer members to the last number of *Bird Notes*. It is hardly necessary to repeat Dr. Amsler's paper on the subject, as several of our members also subscribe to *Bird Notes*.—ED.

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## OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1913-1914.

In accordance with Rule 9, the Council recommends the election of the Marquis of Tavistock and Miss Alderson as members of Council in place of Mr. E. J. Brook resigned and Mr. A. Trevor-Battye retired by seniority, and the appointment of Mr. A. Trevor-Battye as Auditor and of Mr. E. J. Brook as Scrutineer.

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## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

### NOTES ON MY BIRDS AND AVIARY.

SIR,—I have an aviary in the north-east corner of an old walled garden, and in this aviary, which measures 13 yds. by 4 yds. and is 9 ft. high, I have almost 180 birds. These are Green and Red Cardinals, Diamond Finches, Cutthroats, Green Singing Finches, Pekin Robins, Saffron Finches, Zebra Doves, Siskins, Cordon Bleus, Lavender Finches, Redpolls, Bullfinches, Gouldian Finches, St. Helena and Orange-cheeked Waxbills, Amaduvades, Orange-breasted Waxbills, Silverbills, Black-headed Buntings, Scarlet Weavers, Long-tailed Whydah, Love-birds, Goldfinch, Bronze-winged and White-headed Mannikins, Bramblings, Napoleon Weavers, Steel Finches and Sharp-tailed Finches.

There are many artificial nests hung about for the birds, but the only enclosed place for them is a small glass-fronted house, measuring 3 ft. by 1½ ft. and 4 ft high, the door of which is closed during the winter months, and to which access is gained by a few small holes in the sides. All these birds have survived the cold weather, sometimes 18° of frost, *i.e.* 14° Fahr.

I seem to lose fewer than many of my friends, and I attribute this to the exercise the birds have. They are always moving about and have a frequent supply of fresh water, grasses, fruit and blossoms, and, now and again, a few mealworms.

My experience is that those birds which adopt a complete change of costume are always the most combative, and I have therefore shut off the Weavers, etc. All the other birds live harmoniously together and many breed.



SWANS AT ABBOTSBURY.







AFRICAN YELLOW-BILLED DUCK  
(*Anas undulata*).

Photo by Oxley Grabham.  
(Copyright.)



SWANS AT ABBOTSBURY.

The Zebra Doves, Cutthroats, and Diamond Finches are breeding always, and Mrs. Green Cardinal is for the third time the proud possessor of four beautiful eggs.

The most beautiful of all birds in my opinion is the delicate little mouse-like Bearded Tit, but unfortunately I cannot keep them.

There are several evergreen shrubs in the aviary, and in one of these the Cordon Bleus are now nesting. Besides these shrubs I hang up many branches, some without foliage and others of evergreens. There are earthenware basins which are filled twice or three times daily, in which the birds indulge at all hours in free mixed bathing,

Altogether they are a very happy friendly family and give continual delight to all our visitors.

LILIAN NEWALL.

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#### WILD TURTLE-DOVES NESTING IN AN AVIARY.

SIR,—In an orchard aviary we have several Barbary Doves—once loose about the garden, but bird-catchers have forced us to cage them now,—and these are perpetually laying and hatching, and with them in the aviary lives a pair of common English Turtle-Doves, which have mated after being in the aviary for years. The hen ever since I had her has been unable to fly, from a weakness in her legs, but is otherwise healthy. The cock is younger, and arrived on the scene two or three years later. He used to bow and “gurr” to her, but his courting obviously bored her, and boredom is fatal to courtship! Last month I threw a handful of long grass into the aviary. Two days after, a little round grass mat appeared in one corner on the ground, and the hen sat on it. I gave them more grass, and the nest grew and became more cup-shaped. Now the pair are taking turns in sitting on two eggs of which they seem very proud. When I appear with the doves’ food, and the cock is on, he gets off at once, and runs up to his mate and says “Tchup!” which sounds exactly like a sneeze. She goes to take his place, but, I can see, finds it a little difficult to cover the eggs, on account no doubt of her infirmity.

They and the Barbary’s are quite friendly together, except when the latter go too near the nest, when the cock Turtle Dove “fizzes” at them with the curious little angry note so like a Jew’s harp.

The colouring of the bright brown and soft grey of the Turtles as they sit by turns in their green nest under the nut trees, is quite lovely. We are curious to see whether the young will be safely hatched, and whether the weakness of the hen will be in any way inherited, that is if it is constitutional.

\* \* \*

Since writing the above, a mysterious fatality has occurred with regard to the wild Turtle Dove’s cherished eggs. Suddenly they disappeared! The aviary is rat and mouse-proof in every part, except a stretch of wire-netting near the door, which is  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch mesh, not  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, and therefore not mouse-proof. Could mice have devoured the eggs? Only then they would have left the shells. The poor Doves ran about with startled eyes hunting for their eggs, and for several

days they continued their search. Meantime, in one nesting basket (the property of the Barbary's) I found no less than twelve eggs, some fresh laid. The thought crossed my mind, could the Turtles by some means have conveyed their eggs for greater safety into the Barbary's basket? Then I dismissed the idea as absurd, for how could a bird carry an egg, and if it could, how could the egg be conveyed intact up to a high shelf under a roof? The more I thought about it, the greater mystery it appeared to me.

I then set to work to remove the old nest, and I placed a suitable basket-lid with hay in it, on the ground against a bit of south wall in the outer aviary, and threw down several handfuls of long grass and moss near it, the Turtles looking on. That same day an egg appeared in the basket-lid, and the hen sat on it. Now there are two, the grass and moss has all been worked in with the hay for a new nest, and the sitting is being proceeded with as before. The Turtles seem to recognise my desire to help them, for they are not so shy with me as they were. They are extremely intelligent, and so are the Senegal Turtles, far more so than the Barbary and Java Doves.

KATHARINE CURREY.

THE STEAM ROLLER OF THE "FEATHER TRADE" IN THE  
U.S. SENATE—A REMARKABLE SPECTACLE.

SIR,—The American people are now being treated to the amazing spectacle of the steam roller of the wild-bird feather trade being run through the United States Senate in defiance of the appeals and protests of the bird lovers of the United States. It is a case of about 30 importing millinery houses, a few hundred milliners, and a strong lobby of New York lawyers against about 50 million American people. At present the steam roller is going over all opposition, and the indications are that the program of the wild-bird milliners is to be rail-roaded through the Senate as a strict "party measure."

The friends and protectors of birds are striving to end, once for all, the odious and cruel slaughter of the beautiful and interesting wild birds of the world for the cash benefit of the millinery trade in America. The best women of America do not want any more dead-bird hat decorations, and have appealed to Congress to stop all such importations. The practice of bird slaughter for the millinery trade is essentially barbarous and cruel, and it has now become odious and detestable.

The Ways and Means Committee of the House inserted in the tariff bill a clause designed to stop this odious traffic in wild birds' plumage. Ostrich feathers do not come from wild birds. The movement has the support of many bird-protecting societies of the United States, the State and National societies of the United States, the State and National Federation of Women's Clubs, various state game commissioners, and humanitarians generally. It is supported by 130 newspapers and magazines, and opposed by only one newspaper.

Many thousands of letters and telegrams have been sent to United States Senators and Representatives, urging the passage of the Underwood clause in the tariff bill, unchanged. The Underwood clause passed the House without opposition, but one bird importer has said significantly: "You never would have got that through the House if I had known of it in time!"

The Senate is resolutely carrying out the program of the feather importers who "want the money." The democratic caucus of the Senate, by a vote of 3 to 1, *struck out of the tariff bill*, except as to aigrettes, *the whole bird protecting clause!* The milliners' lobby of five New York lawyers has done its work well. It is reported that one of its workers in Washington has said: "Those bird men are not going to get another peep at the Senate!"

Thus far not one good reason has been advanced by any senator, or importer, for the striking out of our clause. The milliners' lobby is making no campaign of public education or appeal. Some Senators claim to believe that in voting to strike out our clause they are *protecting the birds of the United States!* The idea is totally erroneous. Now it is stated that "Germany" has made a strong protest against our clause, because it would interfere with the trade in wild birds' plumage that Germany has built up with our country; and it is reliably reported that "the protest which the Senate Finance Committee received from abroad evidently caused great concern, and *led them to take the action*" which *wiped out our clause at one stroke.*

So then, while the Finance Committee obeys the behest of Germany and the milliners' lobby, the friends of the birds are totally ignored! In response to our appeals, we receive the mystic formulas, "will-be-considered" and "will-receive-attention." The Senate is, and all along has been, in full possession of a mass of facts and details that show the deadly nature of the traffic in wild birds' plumage for millinery. The Senators are not at all ignorant on this subject. They have had the facts ever since last January.

Do you ask me why certain democratic Senators are against us in this matter, and are deliberately and persistently defying the known wishes of the American people? Frankly, I do not know. Ask them, and see if you can secure a satisfactory answer.

The vote in the Senate as a whole is yet to be taken. Without the deadly unit rule, I think that a majority of Senators would to-day sustain the cause of the birds. This is now a world-wide fight. Two European nations are ready to "clean house" as soon as England does so; and in England the bird bill has passed the House of Commons by a large vote. The fight is to an absolute finish. As for ourselves, we will accept no amendments, and make no compromises of any kind with the enemy. We are going to insist upon our clause, unchanged; and we hope that every friend of the birds will join in this fight. Senators who are wrong are not invincible.

WILLIAM T. HORNADAY.

## NOTES FROM BENHAM VALENCE, ETC.

One pair of Ruddy-headed Geese (*Chloëphaga rubidiceps*) had three sets of eggs—four in each one; and all hatched, although not all were reared, owing a great deal to lack of care in their not being provided with a constantly clear run of short fresh grass, etc.

These Geese generally lay four eggs in a clutch, so that twelve fertile eggs from one Goose is quite a creditable performance.

\* \* \*

There are four Pigmy Owls (*Glaucidium passerinum*) in a small aviary at Benham Valence. It was suggested the other day by a visitor to the birds that they would look well if made into pepper-pots!

\* \* \*

Mr. ASTLEY received a brood of five Penduline Titmice (*Egithalus pendulinus*), but all died within a week, of pneumonia, contracted on the journey from the continent.

\* \* \*

Mr. ST. QUINTIN has acquired some Wall Creepers which were hatched in captivity in Switzerland. The same successful aviculturist from whom they came has bred the Pigmy Owls,

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

Mr. GOODFELLOW brought back from Chili, in July, some very handsome Finches—*Phrygilus caniceps*—of the size of Greenfinches, but of a finer and more graceful shape. The male's head, wings and tail is a bright blue-grey, the back and underparts being a rich 'old' gold; the female is much duller, but of the same idea of colouring. They are very handsome.

There were also several Diuca Finches, which have the style of a Chaffinch about them, more especially of the Blue Chaffinch of Teneriffe, which they also resemble in size. This finch has been imported before now. The male is pale grey with a white throat: the female a brownish grey. Both species are to be found in Chili.

\* \* \*

There is a pair of Sun-Bitterns in the aviaries at Benham Valence. These birds are invariably tame and confiding, and when they open their wings, spreading them widely towards the head, look like gigantic moths with rich and variegated tints of mottled chestnut, white and brown. A fine piece of nature's embroidery.

\* \* \*

A male White's Thrush (*Geocichla varia*), the property of Major BOYD HORSBRUGH, imported by him in June, has now moulted in the Benham Valence aviaries, and is a very handsome bird, with its speckled plumage. Unfortunately its mate died.

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*J. H. Riley  
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*In the possession of Mr. Hubert D. Astley.*

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BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

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*Third Series.*—Vol. IV.—No. 12.—All rights reserved. OCTOBER, 1913.

## THE BLUE-HEADED ROCK THRUSH.

*Petrocincla cinchloyyncha.*

By HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

This is perhaps the most beautiful of all the known Rock-Thrushes, and is an inhabitant of different parts of the Himalayas, frequenting rocky and stony districts. This bird is rather less in size than the European *P. saxatilis*, and is a glorified edition of the latter. In captivity it is naturally tame.

I have two males, but the one hen bird unfortunately died in May of this year during my absence in Italy.

The true pair was imported by Major Perreau, and the single male by Major Boyd Horsbrugh. When the new feathers are assumed in August and September, each one on the back is broadly edged with light brown, which will no doubt wear off before the spring, leaving the mantle more uniform blackish-blue.

These Rock Thrushes have a very swift and graceful flight. When let out of their cages in a room, they will dart to the top of a cupboard or picture-frame, the white spot on the wings showing conspicuously. Any idea of a move being made by me to the meal-worm-box will bring one down with swift and silent wings to my side.

The feathers of the head have a more powdered appearance immediately after the moult, becoming purer cobalt blue later on, but I have yet to discover whether these Rock-Thrushes undergo an almost complete vernal moult, as does *P. saxatilis* and also apparently *P. erythrogaster*.

The song, as far as I have heard it, resembles that of other

species of the family ; not exactly melodious, but at the same time pleasing in its wildness, transporting one to rocky glens and streams which well up above them amidst alpine mosses.

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## BREEDING OF BLUEBREAST × CRIMSON-EARED WAXBILL HYBRIDS.

By MAURICE AMSLER, M.D.

On April 7th of this year I turned out from their winter quarters into my small finch aviary three Blue-breasted Waxbills and a hen Cordon Bleu. The former I knew consisted of two cocks, and a hen; they soon settled down amicably, one of the cock Bluebreasts obviously having plighted his troth to the hen Cordon Bleu.

On June 10th I found a typical spherical nest in a privet bush and on the 15th it contained four or five eggs and one of the Bluebreasts was sitting. It never entered my mind until later that this bird was the Bluebreast who had mated off with the hen Cordon Bleu. On July 5th, I found that three eggs had hatched out, the young birds being about half-fledged.

About this time I added to the aviary a cock Cordon Bleu who was the means of my discovering the mixed parentage of the young bird. Immediately he had got over the surprise of once again seeing sunshine, trees and grass, he made up to the female Cordon Bleu, who treated him with absolute contempt whilst her blue breasted mate knocked his would-be rival off his perch and chased him round the aviary. I then noticed that the Cordon Bleu hen's tail was bent to one side, as occurs with all long-tailed birds of this genus after sitting for a few days.

I watched carefully and soon found that she was feeding the three chicks already mentioned. Even so, she might possibly have been feeding the young of a true pair of Blue-breasted Waxbills, but on July 11th, the day before the three hybrids flew, I found in another bush a similar nest containing eggs and being incubated by the other cock and hen Bluebreasts; their eggs are fertile and, I believe, have now hatched.

The nest is rather high and I cannot examine it again without causing a good deal of disturbance.

The young hybrids closely resemble Blue-breasted Waxbills which I have bred before; they are, however, perhaps a trifle paler in colour. Cordon Bleus have the iris of a reddish-brown colour and the beak has a distinct pink tinge. In the Blue-breasted Waxbills the iris is dark-brown and the bill is horn-coloured; the latter species are moreover half-inch longer and, of course, considerably brighter in body colour.

It will be interesting to note later which parent the hybrids favour, and more especially to find out whether they are capable of reproduction. I am hoping to get another brood this summer, which will increase my chance of securing one or more breeding pairs for next year.

I have marked the hybrids with numbered rings and shall turn them out in an aviary by themselves so as to avoid all chance of confusion with either of the parent species.

LATER.—Only one youngster was reared from the second nest and he was obviously brighter in colour than the young hybrids on leaving the nest. Unfortunately he disappeared mysteriously so I shall not be able to compare the gradual attainment of body-colour in the pure-bred and cross-bred young.

\* \* \*

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## HUNTING DUCK EGGS IN THE MARSHEs OF LAKE MANITOBA.

By HERBERT K. JOB.

*(By kind permission of the Outing Publishing Co.)*

*The Luck of an Expedition That Set Out to Solve the Primary  
Problem of Breeding Wild Ducks in Captivity.*

Several years ago when on a scientific expedition in Saskatchewan we secured eggs of various species of wild ducks. A number of these, supposed to be fresh, I carried some 2,500 miles in the cars and set under hens. Most of them proved to have started in incubation and were spoiled. Two incomplete sets, however, that were absolutely fresh, hatched, but the young died owing to improper food. Since that time much has been learned about the feeding of wild ducks in confinement.

In many respects this field is uncommonly attractive. Though

most kinds of wild ducks are readily kept in confinement, very few of them have been made to breed, so far as is generally known. Birds of these species in parks or preserves are usually trapped or wounded individuals taken in the adult state. Though outwardly tame, they usually show no inclination to mate. I have held the theory that if stock hand-reared from the egg could be secured, it would probably prove tame and contented and would more readily breed. From such beginnings it might prove possible to restore some of the species that have mostly vanished from the eastern part of the country.

The desired opportunity to embark on this line of research and experiment came to me this season through the liberality of certain gentlemen who, like myself, are keen over this problem of the wildfowl. Ample funds were donated whereby as Ornithologist of the Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station under Federal auspices, I was enabled to organize a Government expedition to the Canadian Northwest, the purpose being to bring back eggs or young of as many species of wild ducks as possible, to study methods of feeding, rearing and breeding and to give the results to the public in Bulletins of the Experiment Station.

Now, on the very face of it, doesn't this sound like a crazy, ill-considered scheme, to send out a party at large expense into a wilderness entirely new to the leader, and expect him, not only to find the cunningly concealed nests of the various kinds of wild ducks with their diverse habits, but to hatch out the eggs artificially despite the prevalent idea that wild duck's eggs cannot be moved or touched without spoiling them, rear the wild little creatures that no one had ever raised before, and then to bring back the delicate things safely through five days of slambanging in the cars—a journey of some 2000 miles! Nevertheless, the outcome in this case justified the risk—as this article and the sequel will show.

The plan of these articles is to sketch the adventures and achievements of the expedition, leaving it for the Bulletins of the Experiment Station to present the full detail and the further working out of the various problems.

Through unavoidable delay the expedition was unable to start until June thirteenth, 1912, which was dangerously near the hatch-

ing period of most of the ducks. In addition to the subsequent hiring of local help, I engaged as assistant of the expedition my son, George C. Job, of the present Junior Class of Yale University.

Proceeding via Montreal to Winnipeg, we outfitted, selected under the best advice the ideal locality for operation and I secured the necessary permit upon presentation of proper credentials as a representative of our State and Government. The laws of the Province of Manitoba relating to game birds are very strict. According to the reading of the law, such permits are issued only to "other States or Governments." I found the local officials most courteous, however, and fully alive to the need of the preservation of the game.

The field selected for operation was the immense marshes at the southern end of Lake Manitoba. Here there is an inlet from the great lake which broadens out into a vast area of shallow water, dozens of miles long and several miles across. It is a forest of tall canes, reeds and rushes, intersected by all sorts of bays, ponds, creeks and canals, a maze and labyrinth in which it is hard not to get dangerously lost. In spring and summer it is a wild duck paradise, one of the greatest of duck breeding-grounds. On the first day of September it becomes a duck inferno, when hundreds of guns from far and near are turned loose on the unfortunate wildfowl. By October additional hosts have descended from farther north, and the number of the ducks is said to be amazing.

On June twentieth we took train to a station farther west, where we were met by a guide with a big double rig. We needed it, too, for with incubators, brooders, etc., there was much more stuff than one wagon load. Leaving some of it for another trip, we started on the long jog north over the trail. The region was one of flat prairie, with belts and patches of low poplar and willow timber and brush, known in that country as "bluffs."

It seemed refreshing to meet the prairie birds again—upland plovers, Western meadowlarks, prairie horned larks, the coursing Franklin's gulls and black terns, the grebes and coots paddling in the small sloughs and various others too numerous to mention.

The country is almost entirely unfenced and unimproved, just about as it was when the buffalo herds roamed over it. We passed a few log cabins, and in the afternoon came in sight of a little group

of cottages standing out on the level prairie. These were shooting lodges, used by duck shooters in the fall. The owner of one of them I had met in Winnipeg, and he had with true Canadian hospitality offered us the free use of it for our scientific quest, which I was happy to accept.

Comfortably ensconced, for about six weeks we got our own meals and lived pretty much in regal solitude, monarchs of all we surveyed. The guide lived over a mile away, and in the dim distance we could see a few more little homes scattered over the great plain. Half a mile back and more were scattered bluffs of low timber, while out in front, and close at hand, lay the great marsh which was to become our field of activity. A ditch or canal had been dug in from the nearest main waterway through the forest of aquatic vegetation, so that the hunters could paddle their canoes almost to the doors of their lodges. Two of these had tall flag-poles in front, on which they hoisted lanterns at night to guide bewildered ones back to camp. A nice canoe, ready for our use, lay on the shore at the end of the canal.

Before describing the actual work of the expedition, it may be of interest to have a few words of general description. The climate was typical of the North-west prairies, mostly cool and bracing, with frequent heavy showers and occasionally severe heat. One Sunday afternoon the mercury on the west side of the house registered 113 degrees. Next Sunday it was 47 degrees, a raging easterly storm. The saying current out there is that they have three seasons—July, August, and *Winter*. Of course, mosquitoes were abundant, but we were too busy and interested to mind such *small* annoyances. We did growl some, though, at the weather, which was pretty bad for rearing ducklings and even worse for photography. Sometimes I thought I should hardly get any pictures at all.

The few inhabitants of the region are interesting. They are the descendants of trappers for the Hudson Bay Company who intermarried with the Indians. They do little farming, being content mostly to hunt and fish, raise a few cattle, and act as guides for sportsmen. Proud and extremely sensitive, they are very friendly to those who treat them well. They certainly were most kind to us, selling us milk, eggs, butter, bread, and the like. Fondness for

liquor is their great weakness. The Assistant at one time went over to a Sunday-school picnic to which they drove from near and far. There was a series of athletic events, and he was persuaded rather reluctantly, to enter a number of them. To his surprise, he won every event. At the close he was rather scandalized to find that a lot of them had taken to betting on him and had won considerable money!

Close to camp was an interesting historical relic in the shape of a circular trench with a series of separate pits inside it. After the Minnesota Indian massacre in the sixties the Sioux fled up here, pursued by U. S. troops. Our Government offered bounties for their scalps, and the chase was taken up by the Red Lake Indian warriors. Near a timber bluff in sight of our lodge the latter surprised the Sioux, and massacred their women and children. The bucks fled, and, digging the trench and rifle pits mentioned above, made their stand. Again the Red Lakes surprised them when, after quite a siege, they had fallen asleep, exhausted. More slaughter ensued, and the surviving bucks finally took to the marsh and escaped. There is a local tradition that one of them, whose arm was broken by a shot, held his thumb in his teeth to keep the arm from swaying, and ran fourteen miles to safety. He settled in the region, and was said to be still alive.

Early on our first morning we launched forth on the mazes of the reedy labyrinth, taking the guide along to show us the lay of the region. After this, for the most part, we managed to find our own way in the marsh. Occasionally we got puzzled, but always managed to find the way out. As we paddled through the tall canes away up over our heads from one channel to another, each one almost precisely similar, it was easy to realize what care must be exercised by the stranger who ventures out alone.

Soon also I realized the great possibilities of the place. At this season one does not, as in fall, see clouds of ducks. They are scattered out in pairs to breed, but are frequently in evidence.

Turning corners, we would come upon a pair of ducks, or a single one, unexpectedly. Others were frequently passing overhead, especially parties of males. Blue-winged teal were often seen, and also pintails, gadwells, mallards, redheads, occasionally the lordly

Canvasback and others. Now and then a quaint little male ruddy duck, with its amazing sky-blue bill and forehead and rich-hued reddish back, peculiarities of the breeding season, would suddenly emerge near us from the depths and dive again on the instant. The same "stunt" was frequently being performed by Grebes, of various kinds—pied-billed, horned, Holboell's, and Western.

Mud-hens or coots, Virginia rails, soras, yellow-headed blackbirds, red wings, and long-billed marsh wrens were also in evidence with various sounds to contribute to the marsh chorus. Black and Forster's terns were yipping angrily and darting at our heads as we paddled unwittingly near their nests. Very enlivening it all was, especially when a female redhead swam out from the rushes ahead of us, leaving her nest. Hasty search did not reveal it, so we noted the spot for further and successful effort.

Presently we emerged upon a considerable sheet of water, a couple of miles across. Grebes were there a-plenty, swimming about. Here was a fish-net stretched between stakes. In it were entangled numbers of fine big pickerel and pike, and also I am sorry to note, various unfortunate grebes. Out on the open bay were some lesser scaups or blue-bills, and also several pairs of the big white-winged scoters, sometimes called sea-coots, and other ducks as well.

I desired at the outset to find some dry areas in the marsh, or islands where ducks are likely to breed in concentrated numbers, which would save much time and labour. The guide told us there were no islands, but that there were a few ridges along the shores of certain bays and channels where the land rose slightly above water level. One was out ahead of us, across the bay, along a channel.

Paddling over to it, we found the shore moist, but above water overgrown with land vegetation, especially nettles, thistles, vines and all sorts of weeds, truly delightful stuff to struggle through!

The Assistant and I, however, started in with eager expectancy. The upland strip was only a few rods wide, and we undertook a systematic beat, for at any spot a duck might be concealed upon her nest. If we covered the ground thoroughly, and stepped close to her, she would flutter away and reveal her secret.

In this sort of work things happen suddenly when they happen at all. With long boots pulled up for protection, we "beat it" along for some distance, when things began to happen, and with celerity. Suddenly a blue-winged teal sprang into the air only ten feet ahead of us. As we searched for the nest in the thick growth, the assistant made a surprising discovery. He saw two big flesh-coloured eggs buried in the black mud, with just the upper sides projecting.

I thought at first, as we dug them out, that they must be old eggs, left over from last year. Then, as I got them into view, I saw my mistake. They were fresh scoters' eggs, and this was the habit of the bird, as I had previously learned, to bury the eggs in the ground till the set was nearly complete. Then the duck builds her nest and lines it with down plucked from her breast. Such buried eggs as I had previously found were always in dry soil.

Putting the eggs back, we soon found the teal's nest a few feet away with only four fresh eggs, an incomplete set. The nest was a mere depression with a few weed-stems, the downy lining as yet not being added. These nests we marked by tying knots in the reeds. Hardly had we started on when up sprang another duck, almost in my face. Its brown neck, white wing-bars, and moderate size proclaimed it a lesser scaup. The dark olive-brown eggs she left bore out the identification. Holding up to the light one of the nine, I saw that the degree of incubation was moderate, probably about ten days. This nest we also marked and left, as it was our plan to postpone as long as possible being tied up in camp with incubators to watch.

After this we had quite a tramp before finding anything else, almost out to the other bay. There the guide had previously flushed a pintail from her nest on the bank as he paddled past. Though it proved to be empty I hardly had time to grieve before I almost stepped on a pintail on her nest, only a few feet from the original site. She had evidently been robbed, and started a new set close by. There were but four eggs, a fresh incomplete set.

I have found that ducks frequently nest in groups or colonies. This was again borne out when, only a few yards beyond this spot, we flushed another blue-winged teal from a set of eleven. Little

use, though, were these to us, for they were all rotten and smelt strong enough to draw the blue-bottle flies. Two weeks later I found the foolish duck still sitting upon them.

After lunch the nettles across the creek looked more inviting, and in fact various other ducks' nests awaited us there. However, we left them for another day and pushed the exploration. A colony of Western grebes were nesting in the canes growing from the water at the mouth of the creek. Parents were swimming about with young on their backs. I photographed a little fellow that fell off and was caught. Then we made a long detour to the head of the bay, dragged the boat over a rocky ridge, and were in another big lead of water. Female canvasbacks seemed quite numerous here, hanging around as though their young had hatched out. We searched for nests among the tracts of rushes, where they are accustomed to build, but the depth of water made progress slow, and we found nothing.

On beyond here we came across two colonies of the Franklin's gull, with nests built on the floating dead rushes. One colony was small, but in the other there may have been a thousand birds, which gave us pretty exhibitions of screaming and hovering.

We returned to camp about 5 p.m., and I immediately started out for a tramp on the prairie, as there were yet four or five hours of daylight in the northern latitude. Though I happened upon no more ducks' nests, I found a bobolink's, as usual with a contribution from the cowbird parasite that abounds on the prairies, and lays one or more eggs in the nests of nearly every small bird. It is surprising that any escape paying toll, and it usually means the destruction of the brood. I also found a crow's nest with young, and, better yet, a nest of the short-eared owl, in which the female had just laid her first egg. The male flushed first and hovered over me, screaming angrily. Then I hunted up his nest near by amid a clump of low bushes. Later they had six eggs.

This description of the first day's hunt will give a good idea of the work of the first few weeks of the expedition. Sunset was at 8.45 p.m. We hunted all day, and had supper any time from 7 to 10 p.m., according to circumstances. Then came the writing of notes and journal, and, rather late, the changing of photographic plates, as

it was not dark till after 10 o'clock. So we seldom got to bed before midnight, and were up and at it again in good season.

After we had, in general searches, found eggs of most of the common varieties of ducks, we concentrated our efforts on finding the scarcer or more elusive sorts that were lacking. We offered a series of rewards for being shown certain nests, and we ourselves hunted hard. For example, there was the ruddy duck. Three males were constantly seen in a pond of the marsh close to camp. I had searched for hours and days without result, wading through the labyrinth of aquatic vegetation.

Finally, on Sunday afternoon, June seventh, as I went down to the slough after a good rest to have a look, I saw a female ruddy with eleven young swim out from the rushes. This made me nearly frantic, and I resolved to find a nest next day at all hazards. Starting in bright and early, before a great while I had found a red-head's and a scaup's nest, from each of which the young had recently hatched. Then I plunged into an awful tract of rushes and canes. The stuff grew away up over my head, and the dead growth was like a solid wall, the water being over knee deep.

I was nearly exhausted struggling through the stuff, when I received a thrill that dispelled every trace of weariness. There, right before me, lay a ruddy's wicker-basket of rush stems, with eight eggs showing. Upon investigating further I found three more eggs beneath them, buried under a false bottom to the nest. The nest itself was built under a great mass of dead stems with these arched over it. My theory of this double nest was that one pair of ruddies fought another and drove them away from their nest, which they then appropriated, building a second story over the eggs. The defeated householders then seemed to have removed and built another nest near by, for within an hour I found another nest about a hundred yards away in the same tract with four eggs, which might have been the remainder of the first set. The first nest, unfortunately, was deserted and the eggs spoiled. The eggs in the second were only four days from hatching, so I was just in time.

The white-winged scoter also gave us a hard tussle. That incipient set found the first day was abandoned. The scoter is the last of the ducks to lay, usually not laying all its eggs till about the

first of July. Here they nest in under the terrible tangles of nettles and other growth. Every day it was getting taller and more dense, but it was useless to hunt before incubation began. So, early in July, I instituted a series of the most arduous, sweat-wringing tramps. On July fourth as I was struggling through the jungle all of a sudden there arose a tremendous flapping right at my feet. I had almost trodden upon a scoter on her nest, a few feet back from the edge of a creek. Off she flopped into the water, and I had her nine nearly fresh eggs.

Next day I was at it again. Leaving the canoe on the shore of a bay, I tramped four miles away. Then I landed a set of blue-winged teal, fresh, even at this late date. Five minutes later, in a tract of tall marsh grass, I heard a rustle close beside me, and saw the grass move. Throwing down my hat to mark the nest, I made a dive for the scoter, and caught her before she could reach the creek. This nest contained eight eggs, nearly fresh. The parent bird rested quietly under my arm, as though not in the least afraid. All of a sudden she gave one tremendous push and flop, and left me most unceremoniously! Just then there broke a big thunderstorm that had been coming up. The electrical display was especially impressive to one alone and unsheltered out in the wilderness.

Not every day, however, did we score a find. The wilderness was so vast and the ducks so scattered that this nest hunting was almost like the proverbial quest for the needle in the haystack. Sometimes days went by without the finding of a single nest, despite the most arduous efforts. At one time we hired a rig and drove thirty miles, steering by compass over the prairie to Shoal Lake, a large alkaline body of water, without outlet, surrounded by timber. The lake was very low from drought. The adjoining marshes were baked, and the ducks had mostly abandoned them. All we got for our three days' effort was one set of gadwall's eggs found on a little island. Also, on another island, I took photographs of a brood of four funny, fuzzy little long-eared owls, whose home was in a timber "bluff." Returning to camp, we started the incubators, and collected up the sets of eggs previously found.

Our activities disclosed the fact that there were twelve species of wild ducks regularly breeding in the region, namely: pintail,

shoveller, mallard, gadwall, baldpate, blue-winged and green-winged teals, redhead, canvasback, lesser scaup, ruddy duck, and white-winged scoter. I also saw two or three hooded mergansers, one bufflehead and one solitary specimen of our Eastern dusky or "black" duck. The latter here reaches about its Western limit. In a quarter-century of shooting our guide had seen but six.

The locations here chosen by the various species were as follows: Redheads, canvasbacks and ruddy ducks nested out in the deeper water in the thickets of rushes, or sometimes the cat-tail reeds. The scaup occasionally selects such location, but usually has the nest on real ground—usually the bank of a creek, an island, or some ridge of land out in the marsh. This was true also of the scoter—the big fellow that our Atlantic coast gunners call the "white-winged coot," and consider to be a strictly maritime species.

These five kinds are distinctively deep-water or diving ducks. The other seven, "river ducks," so called, seldom nest out over the water. We found their nests on the drier spots in the marsh, on islands, or on the prairie, usually near the edge of the marsh or some smaller slough, yet sometimes quite a distance from water. Frequently they nest quite near human habitation. We were shown several nests close to the homes of settlers. One was close to a schoolhouse, a gadwall's and was found by a little girl at recess.

One foolish pair of blue-winged teal built their nest close to the front door of the unoccupied cottage next to us, under the step of which resided a family of weasels. However, they managed to hatch their brood of eight on the morning of our departure July twenty-ninth, showing that incubation did not begin till the first week in July. A number of similarly late nests were found, probably second layings, the first having been destroyed by thieving crows.

Most of the ducks normally begin incubation the last week of May or the first in June. Some mallards and pintails lay early in May, though we found some sets much later. Most of the canvasbacks and some of the shovellers finish their sets by the middle of May or soon after. On our arrival broods of all these four had hatched, some few being quite large.

Of the above twelve resident species, we secured eggs or young of every one. We hatched the eggs in one kind of incubator,

with splendid results, hatching 92 per cent. of the total number of eggs. Few poultrymen, even under the best of conditions, which we surely did not have, attain such an average. The ducklings, too, were reared with encouragingly little loss. On the 2,000-mile journey back I attended the consignment personally in the express cars, taking sole care of the interesting and almost priceless little fellows, and landed all but a few tiny ones safe at their destination.

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## NESTING OF THE SCALY-FRONTED FINCH.

(*Sporopipes squamifrons* : *Amadina squamifrons* ; *Fringilla  
lepidoptera*).

By W. E. TESCHEMAKER.

This charming little bird has been placed by several authorities among the Weavers, though it has the habits and appearance of a Finch. I express no opinion about the matter. Dr. Butler quotes Russ as saying that it had "only once been imported" into Germany, but in my edition (1878), he says "very rarely imported." A small consignment reached this country in 1907 from which I obtained two examples—unfortunately both females.

It is a handsome little species, measuring, in length over all, 4'38" : wing, 2'12" ; tail, 1'50". The nape and back are a delicate mouse-grey, almost dove-colour ; on the forehead a patch of small, narrow-pointed, black feathers with white margins (which give the species its popular name) ; primaries blackish-brown ; tertiaries very showy—deep black with broad white margins ; tail ditto, except the outer rectrices ; underparts white ; beak and feet, pale flesh-colour ; conspicuous black moustachial streaks ; 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th primary emarginated.

Habitat : "Southern Africa to the south of the Quanza and Zambesi Rivers" (Shelley) ; "South Africa, especially Damaraland" (Russ) ; "from North Cape Colony to Northern Rhodesia" (Haagner).

From Major Horsbrugh's small consignment, alluded to

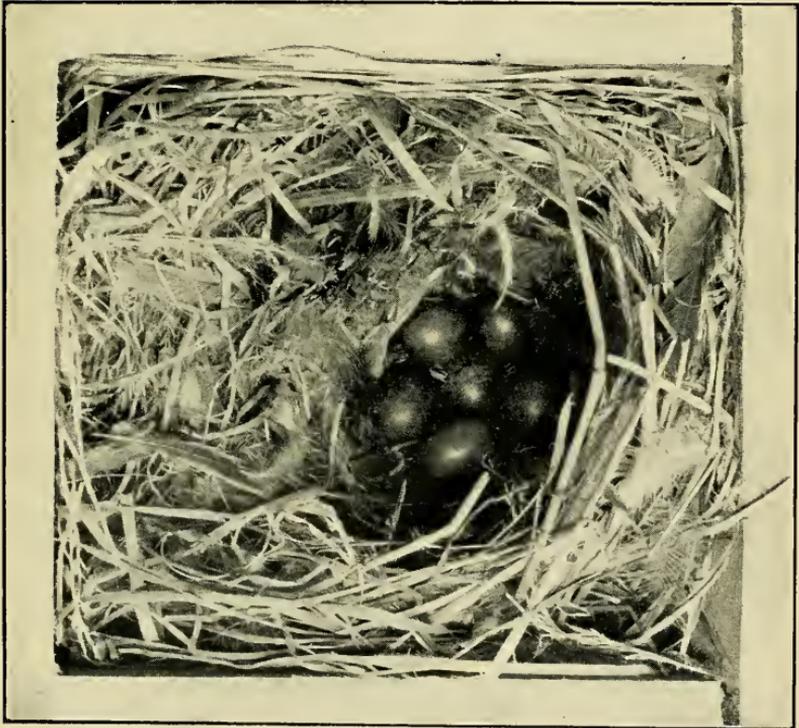
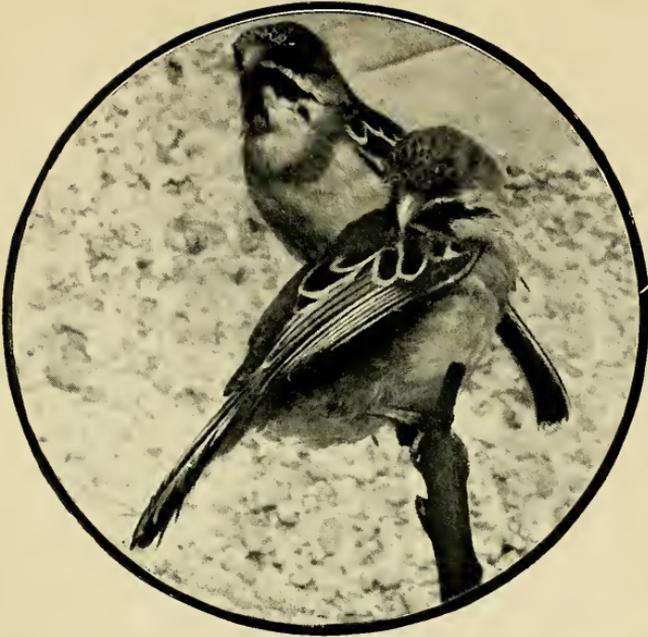


Photo by W. E. Teschemaker.

SCALY-FRONTED FINCHES AND EGGS.



above, the Zoo obtained one male. Mrs. Galloway also had one male and I had two females which laid several clutches of eggs and incubated with great perseverance. I endeavoured to put matters straight by asking the Zoo to exchange their bird for one of my hens and whatever young the pair might produce, but they would not oblige me. I then suggested to Mrs. Galloway that we should toss up, the winner to have a pair, but she said she would not care to part with her bird and would much prefer to purchase one of my hens; so as it seemed a pity that the species should not be bred, I sold her a hen. With this pair Mrs. Galloway won Firsts at the Crystal Palace and elsewhere, but no young were reared. The Zoo lost their bird within three weeks, but my remaining hen lived in my aviary for three years and was then sold to an exhibitor.

Last winter a much larger consignment was imported into Germany, from which I obtained a pair, but the long cold journey was too much for them. I then obtained three more, which arrived in fairly good order, but one bird insisted on roosting in the open flight one stormy night and paid the penalty. The two survivors were apparently hens. I have had such dreadfully bad luck with new purchases during the past year that I almost decided not to give more hostages to fortune; however, I felt so sure that this species would prove a most desirable addition to the list of birds really suitable for English aviaries and only needed a fair start, that I finally purchased a "remainder" of half-a-dozen specimens. The result has confirmed my anticipations. This charming little bird has proved as easy to breed as the Zebra Finch and it is as hardy as it is handsome.

Haagner tells us that the Scaly-fronted Finch breeds "in autumn" (which would of course be our early spring); Stark says that on the Orange River they build in March and April, on the Limpopo in June and July. My first brood flew at the end of May at which time most of the adults moulted; the second brood on the 16th June. The third brood came to grief, the male being killed by some Euler's Finches on the 15th June, when the young were only a few day's old, and the female did not rear them. A fourth nest produced only one youngster which flew on the 17th July. At the present time I have three nests containing eggs or young, so that I hope to have a sufficiently large series by the end of the season to introduce

this little bird to English aviaries with a fair chance of its becoming permanently established and self-reproducing. Several visitors have seen the earlier broods on the wing, though I only seem to have made a note of one name—Mr. G. Coates, of Coventry.

I have 21 eggs of the Scaly-fronted Finch in my cabinet. They are quite unlike those of any other species with which I am acquainted, being so densely overlaid with brown and dark greyish-drab blotches that it is impossible to distinguish the ground colour of the shell. Size, '65" by '50".

The Scaly-fronted Finch is one of the most enthusiastic architects of all the dome-builders with which I am personally acquainted; when it strikes a dull day and cannot think of any other amusement, it sets to work to build a nest; even an unmated bird will complete a nest in a couple of days. Haagner tells us that "they are very common in the mimosa scrub along the Modder River, building an untidy dome-shaped nest of grass, woven with the ends projecting in all directions and lined with the flax-like flowery heads of grasses and feathers." This accurately describes the many bush-nests which I have seen built (and I may add that I have seen as many as four such nests in one small bush), but let me here point out an important difference in habit between this species and the Weavers. The first article of faith of this little bird is that "a Scaly-fronted Finch's home is his castle"; garden-colonies, semi-detached residences and flats he greatly disapproves and, if any neighbour starts house-hunting in his immediate vicinity, there will be a battle royal (which in one case ended in the death of a fine male). Frequently, however, he will select a box, as in the accompanying photo (if the Editor can find room for it), and, in that case, he builds an undomed or only partly domed nest warmly lined with feathers.

The young in the nest are most curious little objects, having large warts of pale cream-colour at the angles of the beak. The task of feeding a family, which seldom is less than four and sometimes six in number, is a heavy one, but I may perhaps venture to point out to those who are not too deeply imbued with the ancient methods of aviculture, that the task can be greatly lightened if insect-food is

liberally supplied. Perhaps in this connection I may be permitted to tell you a little story.

Once upon a time, long long ago, a pair of Zebra Finches nested in a garden aviary. In due course four little Zebra Finches made their appearance. But the father of this flourishing family was of a roving disposition and one day he squeezed himself through a very small hole into the adjoining division of the aviary. Having achieved his greatest ambition he was disappointed to find that the unknown land was not all his fancy had painted it. He turned to come back but, alas, he had forgotten the "Open, Sesame." So he flew up and down calling loudly to his wife and family, whom he had left to look after themselves, until at last he attracted his owner's attention. Then came the first tragedy. It was nearly dark and his owner clumsily hit him with the rim of the net; he fell to the ground and his life-blood stained his white waistcoat.

The brave little mother did not desert her family; all day long she flew to and from the seed tin, digesting hard seed for them, and in due course they left the nest. But every day she grew weaker and weaker, because her digestion could not stand the strain. The owner saw the second tragedy coming; he supplied boiled seed, soft-food, green-food—everything in fact except the one thing which alone could have averted that tragedy; he was not neglectful, simply ignorant. The day came when she flew to the seed-tin for the last time; on the way back she fell to the ground from sheer exhaustion. Then her starving family gathered round her, pressing closely against her and calling piteously for food. Even in her death agony she could not disregard that call. Once she tried to feed them—twice she tried; then her eyes filmed over and her spirit flitted back (as we will hope) to that thirsty land where the wattle blooms and the eucalyptus sheds its perfume. Then came the third tragedy; all day the four young ones, huddled together on the ground, called vainly for food; when the evening came, there was silence.

Then the aviculturist wrung his hands and asked himself what he ought to have done. No one told him, but, in course of time, he found out and said to himself—"What a fool I have been, what a fool!" and he made a vow that, when an opportunity occurred, he would strike a blow for the better way of aviculture. At

length the psychological moment arrived : someone (in a weekly paper) actually tried to persuade the unwary beginner to attempt to induce insectivorous birds to rear their young on farinaeous food. Then he spoke up and, although he was involved in a somewhat acrimonious correspondence, it is within his knowledge that he did good. The acrimony was unfortunate, but anyone who tries to wake up aviculture from its long slumber must be prepared both to give and take a hard blow ; he will not find it an easy task. Now if any unwary beginner should read these lines, let him, for once in a way, disregard the advice of the Food-specialist and the Expert, and take the advice of a fool, who is at least wise enough to realise his own folly : let him treat all hard-billed birds during the nesting season as either wholly insectivorous, or as insectivorous plus vegetarian, species, and I think he will not regret it.

The young Scaly-fronted Finch, when he leaves the nest, is remarkably like an adult ; the black areas on the wings are duller and the wider buffish-white margins of the secondaries make the wings look lighter ; the moustachial streaks are smaller and narrower. The only conspicuous point of difference is in the marking of the forehead ; where the adult wears the scaly feathers from which it derives its popular name, the immature bird has a small patch of brown feathers. It also lacks the black area between the beak and eye.

The call-notes are "soo-sook" ; "chit-chit-chit."

P.S.—The upper figure in the photograph is the male of the pair illustrated : notice his large moustachial streaks, from which the species obtains its German popular name, *Schnurrbartfink* (*Schnurrbärtchen*, Russ) ; notice also his bent tail, from which it may be inferred that he has been recently incubating. Both sexes share the duties of incubation. This species is by no means easy to sex and it is generally safer to take the style and demeanour of individuals as a guide rather than the plumage. The young show the first few scaly feathers on the forehead about fourteen days after leaving the nest.

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## LONGEVITY IN CAPTIVITY

### AND DEATHS OF OLD FRIENDS.

By A. G. BUTLER, PH.D.

In an article which I published in our Magazine in April, 1910, I expressed my conviction that birds when properly looked after live longer in captivity than when free, and I think the evidence which I brought forward in that article, and one which appeared a year later, fully justified that conviction.

Since April, 1911, I have added very few birds to my collection and some of my dear old friends have departed this life, so that my present series consists almost entirely of birds which, like myself, might be generally regarded as in the sere and yellow leaf; but who, to all appearance, are still as active and feel as young as their master.

I think I cannot do better than frame this article upon the pattern of the two previous ones, and therefore I will begin with the

GREY-WINGED BLACKBIRD: \* still in excellent health and plumage after eleven years: the rascal slipped out of his aviary (as I stooped in the doorway to change his food) a few weeks ago, and I had to fetch a net and threaten to catch him with it before he would return to his quarters.

The SHAMA, after more than nine years in my possession, is in admirable condition.

My female SOUTH AFRICAN MOUNTAIN CHAT continues in perfect health, but rather annoys me by dropping charmingly coloured eggs to destruction from the perch every spring; they are not unlike small models of those often laid by the European Blackbird. By the way, my old colleague Mr. W. R. O. Grant seems to think that eggs laid in captivity must necessarily be abnormal: some years ago I gave an egg of *Petronia dentata* to the British Museum collection, the eggs of that species not being previously represented in the series. In the recently published fifth volume of the Catalogue of Birds' eggs I note the following remarks:—"The only egg of the Lesser

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\* My English Blackbird is still perfect in health and plumage after nearly eight and a half years.

Rock-Sparrow in the Collection was laid in captivity and is, no doubt, abnormally coloured."

I strongly suspect that the above conclusion was come to in consequence of Shelley's statement that eggs found in a Weaver-bird's nest by Heuglin were white. Both *P. dentata* and *P. albicularis* laid many eggs in their cage but broke all but two; all the eggs were alike and characteristic of Sparrows: on the other hand white eggs are not rare among the *Ploceidæ*, and I have no doubt whatever that the eggs found by Heuglin were either laid by the builder of the nest, or by some other Ploceid finch which had taken possession of it. I have preserved a good many of the eggs produced in my cages and aviaries and they are quite typical of the species which laid them.

CHINESE BULBUL. I thought I was going to lose this old friend last winter: he became careless of his appearance, bedraggled, dirty and with many broken feathers; he suffered from diarrhœa, was too weak to fly more than about two feet and was altogether disreputable and miserable; then suddenly one morning, like the Jackdaw of Rheims when the curse was removed, he became sprightly again, had a good wash, grew a fresh crop of feathers and is now as well as ever after more than fourteen years in my possession.

ARCHBISHOP TANAGER: given to me by our Editor and still perfect in health and plumage after nine and three quarter years in its flight cage.

SCARLET TANAGERS: my two males, which always fight as each breeding-season comes round, are still in excellent condition after over sixteen years in their flight.

CHINGOLO SONG-SPARROW. The bird mentioned in my last paper as presented to me by Mr. Teschemaker is quite well and lively after five years in its aviary. Last year it paired up with a Tree-Sparrow, but no nest was built and I found no trace of eggs.

TROPICAL SEED-FINCH. This bird, which was presented to me in November, 1907, died on the 14th February, 1912.

FIRE-RED FINCH. Presented at the same time as the preceding bird, but still in excellent health after over five and a half years.

GOULDIAN FINCH. The cock bird born in my aviaries in 1905 is still in fine condition after eight years.

LONG-TAILED GRASSFINCH. Also alive and well after eight years: it is a close companion of a hybrid finch sent to me by Mr. Sich.

ZEBRA-FINCH. The last of my series died last year at the age of ten years.

RED-HEADED FINCH. The last of these died after seven and a half years in my aviaries.

JAVA SPARROW. A cock bird over sixteen years old is still living.

NAPOLEON WEAVER. I still have the same collection of these birds as recorded in my previous paper. As I have never been without the species since I first purchased a pair, it is probable that at least some of my half-dozen examples were purchased in 1900.

GRENADIER WEAVER. Still in splendid condition; six and three quarter years.

RED-BILLED WEAVER. One cock still living after eighteen and a half years in my aviaries.

COMMON HANGNEST. Both still in perfect health and condition. The older bird has been in my possession fourteen years.

ENGLISH JAY. Poor old Jimmy went off unexpectedly after one day's illness at the early age of thirteen. I felt that I had lost an old friend: his big flight-cage is now, I believe, doing duty as a glorified rabbit-hutch: it cost me about twenty shillings to build and I parted with it for one shilling: a nominal payment often makes the purchaser value an article more than if it were given.

COCKATIEL. The male is still vigorous after over seven and a half years.

DIAMOND DOVE. Male still living after over nine years.

PASSERINE DOVE: died soon after the publication of my last article on this subject.

TAMBOURINE DOVE: Male still in good health after over eleven years.

BLUE-SPOTTED DOVE. Died on March 24th of the present year after ten years in my aviaries.

EMERALD DOVE. Died in March, 1912; nine years in my aviaries.

BRONZE-WINGED PIGEON. Died 29th October, 1911; fourteen years in my possession.

As before I will call attention to the most long-lived:—

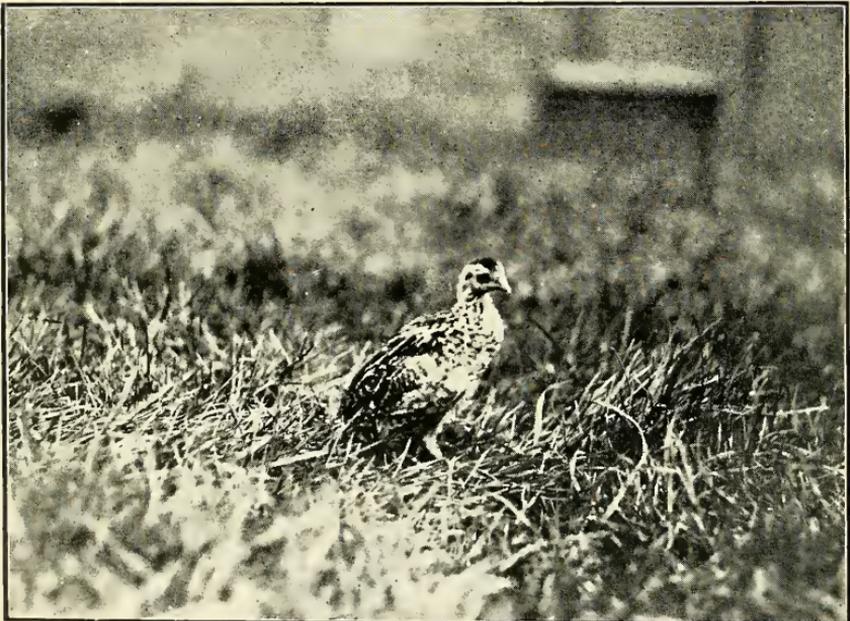
|                                     |        |                              |               |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Merula bouboul</i>               | ...    | Eleven years :               | still living. |
| <i>Cittocinclá macrura</i>          | ...    | Over nine years :            | „             |
| <i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>          | ...    | Over fourteen years :        | „             |
| <i>Tanagra ornata</i>               | ...    | Nine and three-quarter years | „             |
| <i>Rhamphocælus brazilius</i> ...   |        | Sixteen years :              | „             |
| <i>Poephila mirabilis</i>           | ...    | Eight years :                | „             |
| „ <i>longicauda</i>                 | ...    | „                            | „             |
| <i>Tæniopygia castanotis</i>        | ...    | Ten years :                  | dead.         |
| <i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>       | ...    | Seven and a half years :     | „             |
| <i>Munia oryzivora</i>              | ...    | Over sixteen years :         | still living. |
| <i>Quelea quelea</i>                | ... .. | Eighteen & three-quarter     |               |
|                                     |        | years :                      | „             |
| <i>Icterus vulgaris</i>             | ...    | Fourteen years               | „             |
| <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>          | ...    | Thirteen years :             | dead.         |
| <i>Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ</i> |        | Over seven & a half years :  | still living. |
| <i>Geopelia cuneata</i>             | ...    | Over nine years :            | „             |
| <i>Tympanistria tympanistria</i>    |        | Over eleven years :          | „             |
| <i>Chalcopelia afra</i> ...         | ...    | Ten years :                  | dead.         |
| „ <i>chalcospila</i>                | ...    | Nine years :                 | „             |
| <i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>            | ...    | Fourteen years :             | „             |

A few birds have been given to me since I published my last paper on this subject, but some of these were evidently almost played out when they came into my hands and have since joined the majority: I have also bought five British, and one foreign, birds: the most interesting being a very brightly coloured *Liothrix lutea*, approaching the Chinese type and mentioned in my recent paper upon that species; it is becoming riskily tame, and I am constantly in dread of its escaping when I enter the aviary where it is.





YOUNG PRAIRIE CHICKEN WITH FOSTER HEN.



YOUNG PRAIRIE CHICKEN.      Photos by John C. Phillips.

## A PRAIRIE CHICKEN.

RAISED FROM CAPTIVE LAID EGGS.

By JOHN C. PHILLIPS.

Early in 1912 two pairs of Prairie chickens (*Tympanuchus americanus*) were received from the West. Owing to lack of room, one pair was confined to a small movable pen, while the other had the run of rather a large low cage built in a secluded spot in the woods. Its dimensions were 25 ft. by 12 ft., and it was 3½ ft. high.

On May 12th the male from the more fortunately situated pair was heard booming, a very interesting sound, but all attempts to view him failed, as approach to the pen was rather noisy.

By May 15th booming was quite constant, and I was able to get a good look at the performer.

On June 12th the hen bird was found dead, with a nest-full of ten eggs, all of which were placed under a brooding hen. The diagnosis, made by Dr. L. E. Tyzzer, of the Harvard Cancer Commission, was amoebiasis with peritonitis. The male bird died two days later and was found to have been suffering from the same disease.

On July 9th or 10th, five chicks hatched from the ten eggs. Three died after short periods, but the other two were coaxed along, although they were very feeble at first and required constant care and feeding. They had a large space to themselves with a very amiable bantam hen.

One of these two chicks lived only for a week, but the other survived and prospered. He was extremely active and showed an omnivorous taste, pouncing without discrimination on all sorts and sizes of insects, moths, butterflies and grasshoppers. He was fed on scalded house-flies and chopped worms, besides an ordinary pheasant diet, and in time grew extremely tame; in fact I never saw a tamer bird. Anyone could pick him up, and when tossed in the air he would flutter down near one's feet. He was never pinioned.

No definite notes were taken as to assumption of plumage and behaviour, but I well recall that the youngster had a rather monotonous whistle, somewhat like that of a young turkey, which he frequently practised while perched upon his brooder coop.

The photographs show him at different ages. He died Sept. 20th, but as I was absent from home no autopsy was made.

I eventually lost my other pair of old birds, which might have been saved if a large portable pen had been kept for them and shifted frequently to new ground.

Dr. George W. Field, of the Massachusetts State Game Commission, last year raised one Heath Hen (*Tympanuchus cupido*) from eggs collected wild on Martha's Vineyard Isle. Out of four which he hatched, one died, two escaped and one is still alive.

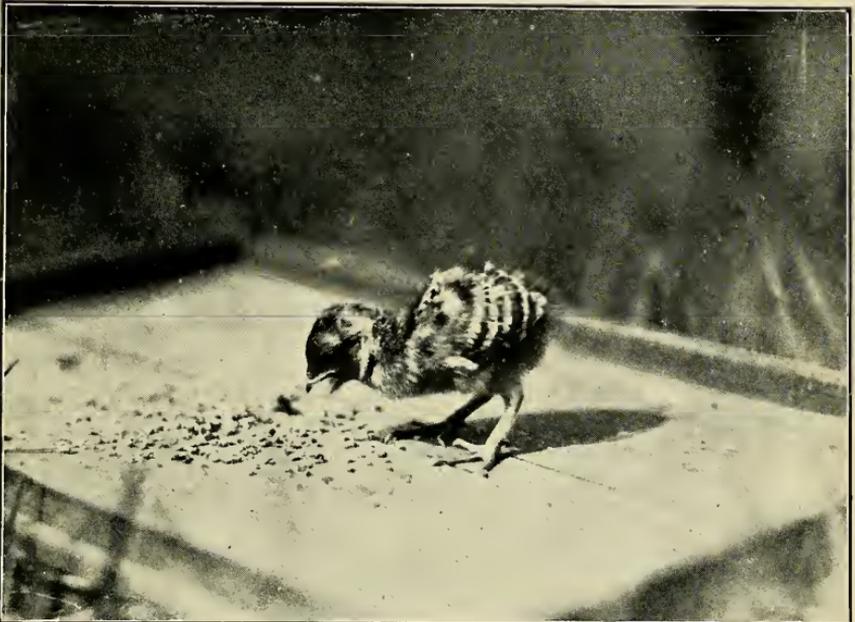
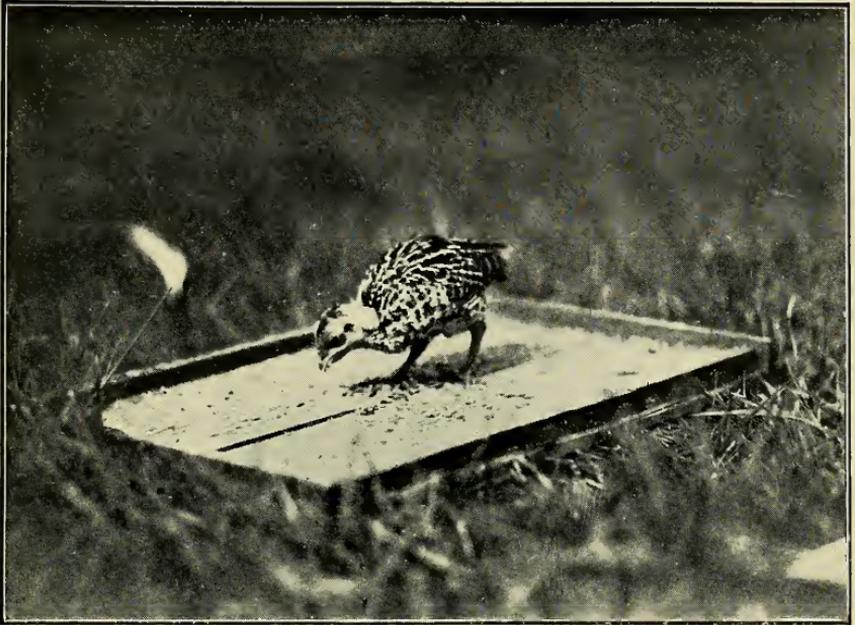
Mr. Wallace Evans, of Oak Park, Illinois, kept some Prairie chickens in a yard which he writes me was somewhat too small. He collected, however, a number of eggs which hatched well, the chicks being strong and healthy. They remained with the hen until six or eight weeks old when they "suddenly and mysteriously disappeared."

This is all I can gather as to the behaviour of Prairie chickens in captivity. It is meagre enough and yet I think something might be done, with care, patience, ground free from amoeboid infection, and a goodly supply of money.

Mr. Evans might be able to get a few pairs for anyone in England who was interested, but the experiment would hardly be worth while unless carried out on a considerable scale.

It might be of interest to add the autopsy report for the pair of birds which produced my eggs. I quote it verbatim from Dr. Tyzzer's letter of June 21, 1912:—

*Adult female.*—"There is no marked emaciation and nothing of note externally. The peritoneal cavity contains thin reddish brown fluid. One coeca presents several lesions measuring from 0.2 to 0.7 cms. in diameter, of grayish yellow colour, over which the mucous membrane appears to be intact except over the largest lesion, where the surface is eroded. These lesions are distributed over about 6 cms. of the blind extremity of the coeca. The liver is diseased throughout. The lesions are sharply defined with opaque slightly elevated edges marked with bright red, sometimes scattered and sometimes as a zone within the peripheral opaque zone. The surface within is dull brown, slightly grayer color than the uninvolved liver. The fibrinous exudate is adherent to the surface of the



Photos by John C. Phillips.

YOUNG PRAIRIE CHICKEN  
(*Tympanuchus americanus*).



lesions in certain portions of the liver. The small intestines and other organs appear normal.

Stained sections show large numbers of amoebae in both the lesions of the liver and those of the coeca. Diag. : amoebiasis with peritonitis.”

The male bird, which died shortly after the female, showed much the same conditions. The disease must have been acute, as there was no emaciation in either individual.

Wenham, Mass., U.S.A.

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“GENTLES! . . .  
PERCHANCE YOU WONDER?”

By C. BARNBY SMITH.

I use the above words in a widely different sense to that in which they were used by the sorely tried Peter Quince, but it is a fact that the use of various artificial foods for rearing game birds has become so common that the value of gentles seems in danger of being overlooked; in some cases, I think, to the detriment of the would-be rearer.

A few years since, Mr. St. Quintin (than whom few people have wider experience of game birds) wrote to the Magazine asking for those who had tried the use of gentles to record the result. This season I determined to give them a good trial, not only on young birds, but also on some old Tree Partridges with a view of bringing them into breeding condition. I have on more than one occasion written to the Magazine about Tree Partridges, and pointed out how they can easily be kept on grain alone in a run devoted to Tragopans or other pheasants; indeed, under such conditions, I have found them thrive with practically no attention, though, of course, they could not be expected to nest successfully. This Spring I put a pair of common Tree Partridges (*Torqueola*) in an enclosure by themselves, and my other pair of these birds in an enclosure with two hen Rufous-throated Tree Partridges (*Rufigularis*). I fed all the birds freely on gentles in addition to grain, and the result was, I am

satisfied, highly stimulating ; possibly too much so, as will be seen from the number of nests built and discarded.

First, as to the pair of common Tree Partridges in an enclosure to themselves, they made one of their curious domed nests as early as 10th March. This nest was as usual a hollow scooped out in the earth and an enormous mass of grass and litter built over it with an opening at the side just large enough to admit the bird. The entrance to the nest is often blocked up with litter when the nest is not in use. Snow spoiled this particular nest, but another was made within ten days and two eggs laid in it. This second nest was then deserted without apparent reason, and thereafter, until the end of May, at least eight more nests were made and pulled to pieces by the birds themselves with surprising zeal and alarming lack of discretion. The rapidity with which a new nest would be made was wonderful. Both cock and hen would work as if their existence depended on getting sufficient material together in a couple of hours, and what they could do in that space of time was incredible. Nine eggs (possibly ten) were laid altogether, seven of them were fertile and several got broken. I do not think the deserting of the nests can be attributed to my interference, because although when I saw what was happening I took the eggs from time to time to hatch in an incubator, yet a new nest was several times made, or the old nest destroyed, before I took the eggs. The birds were not shy about their nesting operations.

Now as to the other four birds. The two Rufous-throated hen partridges joined forces and built endless nests from mid March to early June, laying I think not less than fifteen eggs ; all unfertile. Many of these nests somewhat resembled those of wood ants in Norway, as the birds used great heaps of pine needles in default of sufficient grass. I have had these birds for some years but never knew them so active in nesting. The two common Tree Partridges in this run never paired (though in splendid condition), but the cock for two months would whistle plaintively for a couple of hours, morning and evening, in a way I have not previously known. At the end of May, thinking the breeding season was over (and lacking space) I put the breeding pair of partridges with the four other birds, with the result that the unpaired cock was promptly killed, the un-

paired hen half scalped, and the two Rufous-throated hens continued nest making and egg laying, aided vigorously in the former process by the surviving cock, but the eggs were not fertile.

As to the chicks from the other run: six were hatched alive and, with the exception of one killed by accident, all thrived amazingly, being fed mainly on gentles as I could not obtain fresh ants' eggs. For the first few days the gentles were scalded in boiling water and the birds fed by hand, and afterwards living gentles, well cleaned in dry sand, given. Custard was also given in the early stages. The birds refused Spratts' Partridge Meal, and although confined in a small area on stale ground, I never knew birds thrive better. The incubation period for these birds is twenty-four days.

I have also mainly used gentles this year for rearing young Crested Tinamous and found the result very satisfactory. It may be argued that these birds are easy to rear, or that the season has been favourable, or both; but I have not lost a single young bird from disease, and at early stages the birds took more readily to gentles than to artificial food, and grew very rapidly. The difficulty I have had with my young Crested Tinamous—which were from time to time hatched in an incubator and afterwards placed under a hen to rear—was to get them to answer the call of the hen. They seemed (unlike the partridges) to have no conception of this, and would neither come readily to be brooded or fed for at least a week after hatching. In one case, the hen, possibly being cosmocentric in her views, got so disgusted at the young birds' conduct, that she started to kill them all after a few days time; luckily another hen of more benign nature was at hand, and all ended well.

The habit of Crested Tinamous is to lay eggs on every high hill and under every green tree in their neighbourhood, and as the eggs are grass green and often partly covered they are difficult to find. During the first week of July, the cock Tinamou collected three eggs into a small depression under a little Scotch fir, made several experimental trials in sitting for half-an-hour a day before he ultimately commenced to sit steadily, and, as the reporters say of the House of Commons, “was left sitting at the time of our going to press.”

The incubation period for Crested Tinamous is 21 or 22 days.

## IN THE GUARD'S VAN.

By MAJOR and Mrs. BOYD HORSBRUGH.

It seems somehow decreed that when I am travelling it should always be my fate to have birds with me. I have brought birds home from South Africa on three occasions, from America two or three times, and from various parts of the earth, a cage or two has always been part of my luggage.

It is all very well, in our little island, to feed and water your birds before you start and to put them in charge of the guard while you sit comfortably in a smoking carriage. But on a journey of days, down the long rolling Karroo where the train crawls its thumping clanging way at fifteen miles an hour, until you swing down the winding curves of the Hex River Valley, and Cape Town lies at your feet at last;—or across Europe, with days and nights to pass before even Calais is in sight—the problem then is a very different one.

And so I travel in the guard's van; strictly forbidden it is true on all railways and in all countries, and many and varied are the experiences I have had.

In 1906 I came down from Potchefstroom in the Transvaal to Cape Town, bringing with me a large consignment of Violet-eared and Black-faced Waxbills, Lovebirds, Melba, Quail Finches, Weavers, Chats, Robin Chats, and a crowd of other birds.

It is a weary journey, especially to one who has often made it (once during the war I did the greater part in a covered coal truck); and the way by Fourteen Streams to Kimberley and De Aar and then through the everlasting Karroo to the Cape, becomes one dread nightmare of dust and glare, changing at nightfall it is true to the wonderful colours that are the glory of Africa.

“Slowly the desert changes.”

On this occasion I travelled for the first day in luxury, as I had a deck chair set out and an empty guard's van all to myself. I had moreover a sympathetic guard, who was greatly interested in my birds and who helped me to sort mealworms, to cut up fruit and to concoct the various messes so well known to any aviculturist.

At night I went to the dining-car in the front of the train and then to my sleeping-berth. This was all very well, going through

the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, but it was a long train, and when we came to the Hex River Mountains, I forgot—or had never known—that the train would be divided into two; and sitting unconcernedly in the guard's van, I saw to my disgust the front part of the train pull out of the station, bearing with it my bed and my dinner.

There was nothing at all to be done. I thought of many impossible schemes; searched vainly for food in the few minutes left to us at the way-side station in the desert, and finally plunged back into my guard's van, hungry, furious and perfectly helpless!

I slept in the chair and ate some of the birds' over-ripe fruit for dinner, but when, on the following day I missed my breakfast and luncheon (seeing them steam off in front of my nose each time) I was more than exasperated.

At this point I sat down and composed a telegram which made all the station-masters down the line sit up and take notice, and just before dinner as that wretched front half of the train was again moving off, I did a desperate sprint and got on board.

I had a few brief words with the guard and then got my last three meals all in one, and made up for lost time.

The guards on the South African lines are usually English, or of English-speaking parentage, and are easily dealt with as long as they are decently treated. I have many pleasant recollections of them and many long talks and discussions stored up in my memory.

As the train 'clumped' clumsily down the long reaches from the high veldt to the sea, my guard and I discussed the affairs of the nations. Men long from home questioned me hungrily, interspersing bits of personal narrative.

"What pay did the guards get now on the S.E.? and the engine drivers? Tom Hogben 'e went crazy one day driving 'is engine and never noticed the signals."

"But I wouldn't go back now. I've got used to this country though I thought as I never would."

And then the usual old accustomed query: "Do you know a little bird, Sir? 'e lives in bush and I've seen 'im sitting on a branch and singing most beautiful! e's a sort of grey and 'is legs are yellow and 'is tail black—at least I think it is. I can't exactly

describe 'im, but 'e sings beautiful and I thought you might know." But I didn't know.

In May of this year, 1913, I travelled from Genoa overland to Calais bringing with me about 60 birds. The Italian guard was a revelation. In his own home no doubt he is an estimable father-of-family—anxious over the bambino's first tooth, insistent on Maria's first communion; an only son perhaps—and kindness itself to the old mother with whom he and his wife and the children all live amicably together.

On his own train it is another story. He is a creature objectionable in the extreme. He gapes for tips as a young cuckoo gapes for food, and is just as insatiable. How I hate doing English Hedge-Sparrow to an Italian Cuckoo! Furthermore he has as many brothers as an Indian servant, and all of them, in some mysterious way, manage to control and to do, totally unnecessary jobs and have to be tipped accordingly. My birds and I paid for Maria's outfit and contributed largely to her dowry.

The French guards are of two kinds. The first is very "red-tapey" and won't let you travel in the van at any price—he won't even take a 'pour-boire,' but if tactfully approached he will fall to a cigar—a good one is quite unnecessary as nearly all French cigars are villianous, so I kept a special brand of very long black ones. They smelt like burning seaweed and were much appreciated.

The second type of guard is the perfect gentleman! and he is also the one more usually met with. He does his best to help, talks all the time, is joyously enthusiastic and generally has many stories with which to enliven the journey.

The guard's van in France is usually just behind the engine, and in it there is a sort of conning tower, much like that of a submarine. From the raised seat inside it one looks right over the engine on to the line close ahead, and at first the view is rather alarming. As a motorist one is accustomed to slow up for corners but the train just rushes blindly at them and tears round with a shriek from the whistle. It was not until I remembered, with a sigh of relief, that trains run by signal and have a clear road and a right of way, that I got over the feeling that there was sure to be a donkey cart round the corner into which we were bound to crash.

I felt at home with my last guard. Again we discussed the time-worn European situation; we grew into brothers and friends over Alsace Loraine, and as the train flew its corners, its whistle screaming to the heavens, we talked of aviation and branched off to motor bandits.

I have come to mistrust such catch words as "The Entente Cordiale," but in this case I believe there is much more in it than the words convey. That "much more" being borne home to me in the guard's van!

Dover,—sober and grey, and a home-grown Kentish guard twenty-five years on the railway, brought this journey to an end. But short as it was, the two hours run to town was full of interest; and again, in the intervals of feeding and discussing the birds in my care, we talked of the things we both knew and of the land we both called our own. In this case it was bounded narrowly, for Northumberland and Devon were a whole world away. Nevertheless we were at one.

And I count it not the least of my experiences to have travelled often and in many lands with the guards in the guard's van.

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## CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, &c.

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### NOTES FROM CANON DUTTON'S AVIARIES.

My breeding results have not been very good this year. A pair of Malabar Parakeets (*Palæornis columboides*) laid two eggs, but they did not hatch, and I rather think they were not fertile. A pair of *P. docilis* had three nice young ones, but deserted them. I found out afterwards they had been too much looked at. These were followed by two young *cyanocephalus*, one a rickling. They were left unobserved till old enough to take. The rickling died in time. The survivor is a nice sturdy bird, and a pair of Diamond Sparrows had five eggs. Two hatched but were found dead. They have another nest now (August).

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### A VISIT TO AN INTERESTING COLLECTION OF "SOFT-BILLS."

SIR,—Through the kindness of my bird-dealer's wife, I recently spent a most pleasant afternoon visiting the varied and excellently-kept collection of Soft-bills, which a customer of theirs makes his special hobby.

As he is a medical man and too busy *himself* to undertake the rearing of

young nestlings, he is ably assisted by a relative of his, who is most successful in this difficult branch.

The doctor has mostly native (that is indigenous birds), but some African and other tropical "Insectivorous" as well, all in splendid condition. As far as my memory serves me. I have noted down the Portuguese birds that most attracted me.

A handsome "Papa-Figos" (*Oriolus Galbula* of *Linnaeus*), two Nightjars, various Shrikes, a Melodious Warbler, a Rufous Warbler, Nightingales, Blackcaps, Hoopoes, Jays, a Crested Wren, Crested Larks, a Russet Chat, Robins, an Owl, and a "Great Bustard," Blackbirds, a Crow, also a bird about the size of a Blackbird, with brownish mottled plumage and quite a wig of long black feathers on his head, very tame.

The doctor told me this kind is quite common here even among the hills round Lisbon, but did not know its name. These are all of the native birds I can remember.

Further, there was a beautiful "Metallic" Blackbird from America, "shot" as it were with blue and green tints, shining through its black plumage: very striking. Also a number of little gay African mites, whose names I cannot enumerate.

Among the "Insectivora" there were a few "graminivorous" kinds, such as a pair of Bleeding-heart Pigeons, a pair of Zebra Doves, some Goldfinches and Canaries, etc. My bird-dealer's wife tells me that this gentleman is almost the only real amateur among their list of customers. Many keep a few cage-birds as pets, but are not in any sense "Aviculturists," and the majority purchase chiefly poultry, pigeons, etc., for purely utilitarian purposes.

CHARLOTTE E. IVENS.

P.S.—The "Cuchicho," *i.e.*, "Calandra Lark," is very common here (Portugal), but I did not see it represented in the above collection.—C.E.I.

#### NOTES FROM WORCESTERSHIRE, NEAR CLEOBURY MORTIMER.

##### THE NIGHTJAR.

SIR,—The following story with reference to the power of ventriloquism possessed by this bird may be of interest to your readers. For some days in June I had heard a curious bleating sound, and thinking it was caused by some very young calves, as no lambs were near my house. I asked the shepherd if it was so. He replied that the peculiar sound came from a queer bird in the sky and that I was not the first person to ask him this question, as only the previous year a man had stopped at his cottage to tell him that there was a lost lamb bleating in the meadows and he told him that it was none of his and there were none around. Upon which the man determined to find out for himself from whence the bleating came. In vain he searched the field, a rough marshy meadow, hearing the sound continually near, and then far off, until at last he saw a bird rise from the ground, and only then was he convinced there was no lost lamb.

Last June, in broad daylight, at mid-day, and for nearly a week, I have seen a Nightjar soaring round the meadow in circles and each time that it swooped downwards that curious note seemed to rise out of the ground first on one side and then on the other at my feet. Having read that the Nightjar, when perched lengthwise on a bough, had the power of throwing his voice in various directions with each turn of his head, I was searching in the hedge and on the ground and it was some time before I discovered it circling in rapid flight above me.

Is it usual to be on the wing at mid-day? And was it soaring over its mate on the nest, or is this daylight flight, its joyful welcome on first arrival to its summer haunts? Knowing so little of the habits of the Nightjar I should feel grateful for any information.

A Water Ousel or Dipper has for a few years built its nest against the dripping rock and under a waterfall within full view of my house.

This year the nest was robbed, whereupon the bird promptly built another within a few feet of the original spot.

These notes are the personal observation of my sister, Mrs. Mather.

E. DOROTHY LEEKE.

#### THE SEED SNIPE.

SIR,—I was very interested to read the account of a pair of Common Seed Snipe (*Thinocorus rumicivorus*) that our editor has been fortunate enough to procure. I knew these birds well when camping out in the Andes above Mendoza from the altitude of 10,000 to 13,000 feet.

We used to meet with one other but much rarer Seed Snipe, D'Orbigny's (*Thinocorus orbignyianus*) which was only to be found in the most utterly desolate valleys, at 12,000 up to 14,000 feet, always like the common variety, feeding in some damp spot. When on the ground amongst the broken rocks they are extraordinarily difficult to see.

When flushed both birds utter a sharp cry several times in succession. They look rather like moths with their quiet jerkey flight.

For some time I could not make out a noise that would often continue all night round the camp: a sound somewhat like a frog's croak without the rough notes. At last I found it to be the common Seed Snipe, but was never sure if it called while flying to and fro, which is what it sounded like. The sound is at any time very difficult to locate, at first appearing far away and at the next moment at one's feet.

I should think that they would do well in a dry aviary with a damp sandy spot in it. I never found them except in a swampy place. Even when they had young a day or two old they were always in some such spot.

In the winter when the mountains were snow and frost-bound I found the common variety in flocks round the town of Mendoza in the plains.

PHILIP GOSSE.

## NESTING OF THE GREAT TIT.

SIR,—I was interested to read Dr. Amsler's account of his success, on which I congratulate him. The changes of policy of our Society are also very interesting.

I well recollect that our late most excellent Editor, Mr. Seth-Smith, several times impressed upon me the fact that medals would only be awarded for articles which appeared *first* in our Magazine, and Mr. Bonhote even suggested to me that my account of the nesting of the Blackcap might not qualify for a medal because I had quoted some sentences which I had written some years previously in *Bird Notes*! To-day it appears to be sufficient to write an article in *Bird Notes* to secure a medal of our Society. I congratulate the Society on its more liberal policy.

The awarding of a medal for the young of parents kept only partly in captivity seems also to be a new departure, for I have an indistinct recollection that a medal was once refused for a species of Guinea-fowl reared in this way. As a matter of fact, I believe that several species of Tits have reared young in this way. One summer a pair of Blue Tits found their way into one of my aviaries, through a single large mesh of the netting, and reared their young partly on what I provided and partly on what they brought in to the aviary themselves. I mentioned the matter to our member, Mr. Wormald, who told me he knew of a similar instance.

W. E. TESCHEMAKER.

\* \* \*

Mr. Teschemaker is quite correct in thinking that in order to gain the Society's medal for breeding any species for the first time in captivity a full account must appear in the Magazine, which account in the case of the Great Tit *was sent by Dr. Amsler for publication*; but as it would have been an exact duplicate of one in *Bird Notes*, published a fortnight previously, and seeing that a lot of the members of the Avicultural Society are also members of the F.B.C. I thought it would perhaps be sufficient to state that Dr. Amsler's paper had been received. In any case I try to aim at publishing original articles, etc. and to avoid appearing to merely copy them from a contemporary publication, feeling sure that many members would not be satisfied in finding portions of the Magazine filled up with replicas of what they might have, or had, already read in another one a short while previously.

As to the awarding of the medal to Dr. Amsler for breeding the Great Tits, the decision must rest with the Council. [N.B.—A medal is still due to him for breeding the Hooded Siskin—*Chrysomitris cucullatus*]. If a medal has already been granted by another Society (or Club) the advisability of adding a second one for the same object is, I agree, questionable. I take it that our Society was formed for the mutual study of living birds as pets or otherwise, and not for fostering a spirit of mere competition. Personally I do not consider any award should be necessary, for if aviculturists are really keen, no medals of any calibre or quality will stimulate them to encourage their birds to nest and reproduce

their species; for members will be aviculturists for the love of the thing itself; and if it is not so, if they keep birds merely to gain a medal, then they are no true and fervid aviculturists.

HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

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#### A GREAT VICTORY FOR THE BIRDS.

The United States Senate has elected to preserve unbroken its record in the conservation of wild life. After a prolonged and very strenuous struggle with the feather trade, the friends of the birds, both in and out of Congress, have won a complete victory. On September 2nd, the Senate democratic caucus voted to withdraw the amendment it previously adopted to the bird-protecting clause of the tariff bill, and restore that measure as it was written into the tariff bill by the House Committee on Ways and Means. Inasmuch as there is no probability that this action ever will be reversed, the war with "the feather trade" may be accounted as terminated, in a iweeping victory for the birds of the world.

The action taken by the caucus affords reasons for profound congratulation. Heretofore no party lines ever have been drawn in Congress against birds, or other forms of wild life; and the prospect that the wreck of the bird-protecting clause might or might not be patched up in the conference committee, at the Senate's expense, gave the bird protectors a feeling of genuine sorrow. It seemed deplorable that the Senate should, for even one month, assume a position of friendliness to bird slaughter, and draw party lines against the birds.

But the ship of state has righted itself, and once more rests on an even keel. The new tariff bill will prohibit the importation of wild birds' plumage for commercial purposes, no matter from what country they come, and will totally abolish in the United States and all its territorial possessions the odious and cruel traffic in the skins and feathers of slaughtered wild birds. The news of the action of the Senate will give joy to millions of people, all over the world, who now are thinking very hard on the subject of bird destruction.

The friends of the birds will be deeply grateful to Senator George P. McLean, who ably championed their cause in the Senate; to Senators Chamberlain and Lane of Oregon, who through their bold and aggressive stand in the great caucus fight of September 2nd, literally snatched a victory out of the jaws of defeat; to Senator James A. O'Gorman who took a position on the right side at a most critical moment, and to Senators, Hitchcock, John Sharp Williams, Gore, Bryan, Bacon, Shively, and other democratic Senators who were in a position to make their influence felt.

The campaign was inaugurated and managed throughout by the New York Zoological Society and National Association of Audubon Societies. Immediately it attracted the vigorous support of National and State Federations of Women's Clubs, the State Audubon Societies, many patriotic societies of women, the Women's League for Animals, and a host of other organizations and free-lance leaders. The press of the country at large supported the campaign

with vigour and enthusiasm, and some of the strongest editorials were published in cities and towns far from the storm centre.

The number of personal letters written to members of Congress during this campaign was enormous. It is estimated that 100,000 would be under rather than above the mark. The women of America seized upon this campaign as their one golden opportunity to square themselves on the bird-millinery question, and put a final quietus on the traffic they had long abhorred. The traffic was swept out of the country on a tidal wave of indignant protest that was irresistible.

To all those who helped to carry through this campaign to a victorious finish, much credit is due for having won the first great victory ever scored for the birds of the world. The effect of it will be felt all round the world, and in every land where birds are to-day unprotected from the gun, the snare and the blowpipe of the cruel hunters of the feather trade. Now the word of the leaders is : " On to London, Paris, and Berlin ! "

The accuracy of the above is vouched for by W. T. HORNADAY,  
New York Zoological Park, September 4th, 1913.

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[From the *Washington Post*, September 3rd, 1913].

#### FRIENDS OF BIRDS VICTORS.

#### SENATORS BAR OUT OF THE UNITED STATES IMPORTS OF WILD PLUMAGE.

For five hours last night Democratic senators fought out the question of whether or not the plumage of wild birds should be permitted to be imported into the United States. The senate committee had agreed to a modification of the drastic prohibition of the House. This modification was denounced by the Audubon Society and other lovers of birds, anxious to stop their slaughter, as tending to make the House provision absolutely ineffective.

The fight for the House provisions was led by Senators Lane and Chamberlin, of Oregon. The caucus finally decided to stand by the Committee. The two Oregon senators bolted, and others supported them. Party managers then found the spirit of insurgency too strong, and the House paragraph was adopted. This absolutely prohibits the importation of the plumage of wild birds except for scientific and educational purposes.

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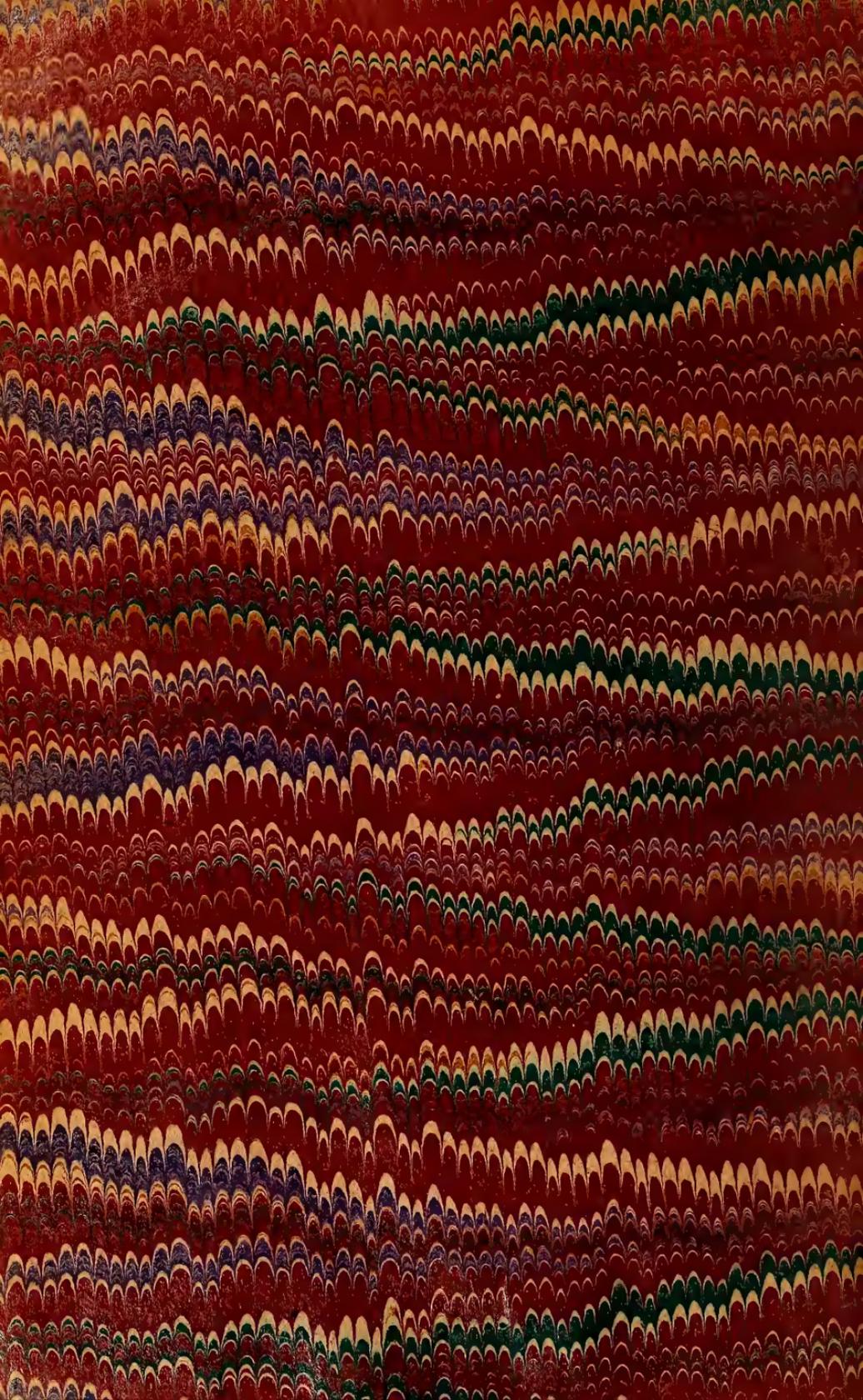


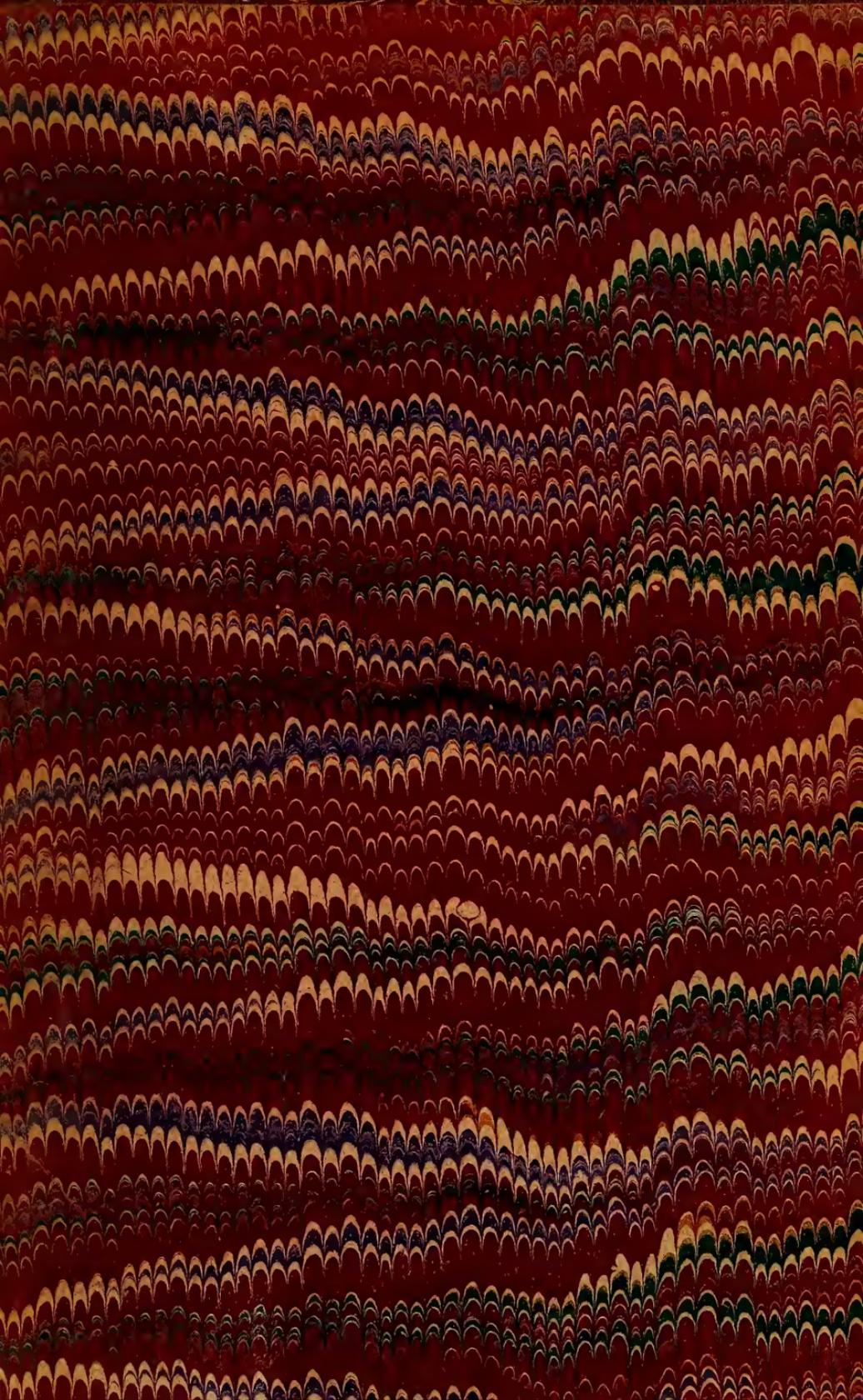












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