

but, not being an accomplished fisher, failed to make a catch. Both this bird and the Sacred Halcyon have recently surprised me by laying eggs that are rusty brown instead of white. Such seem to me to be cases of reversion. In the country districts the *Dacelo* is known as the "Bushman's Clock" or "Laughing Jackass." At an hour when farmers should be leaving their beds the merriment of this bird is loud and long. They hold "corrobories" upon our chimney-stacks.

One of the birds that has interested me most of all in this district is the White-throated Thickhead (*Pachycephala*). Rusty brown when a few months old, uniform grey when a year of age, and jonquil-yellow ventrally when adult, it exhibits three most interesting phases. When the nestlings of this species fare abroad, it is the rule of each parent to look after the same young bird during the whole of the day, and I believe throughout the early part of its life. There are generally only two young in each brood.

Autumn brings silence among the birds of our garden. The Collared Crow-Shrike (*Cracticus torquatus*) almost alone relieves it, and with a rich, liquid, impetuous, and penetrating voice talks to the animals along the hedges immediately surrounding the town. Its voice appeals to me as being one reserved for the quiet days of the autumn. Nature's compensation for taking away the birds of the summer is the gift of the more gaily dressed Robins (*Petræca phænicea* and *P. leggi*). These birds are without the song of the English Robin, but with their pleasing forms and demeanour will help us through the winter to the time when spring arrives again.

XVI.—*On the Birds of Sibthorp's 'Fauna Græca.'*

By P. L. SCLATER, D.Sc., F.R.S.

DR. SIBTHORP'S 'Flora Græca' is a famous work in botany; but it is not generally known that he had intended to prepare also a 'Fauna Græca,' and left behind him at his death a beautiful series of zoological drawings, which now

belong, as do the original drawings of the '*Flora Græca*,' to the library of the Botanical Gardens at Oxford. These drawings, like those of the plants, were made by the celebrated artist Ferdinand Bauer, who accompanied Sibthorp in his journeys to Greece and the Levant in 1786 and the following years. They have been arranged and bound in three folio volumes, which bear the following MS. title:—

"*Fauna Græca Sibthorpiana*, or Drawings of the Animals of Greece and the Levant executed by Ferdinand Bauer for Dr. John Sibthorp, but never engraved."

The first volume contains "*Mammalia*, *Amphibia*, and *Pisces*" (with 94 drawings), the second "*Pisces*" (with 85 drawings), and the third "*Aves*" (with 114 drawings). The drawings of the last volume appear to have been arranged according to Gould's '*Birds of Europe*,' and are named (in MS.) with English and Latin names. As regards these, there is a MS. entry which gives us the following information:—"The names marked '*G.*' have been determined by J. Gould, the names marked '*H. E. S.*' by H. E. Strickland: all the rest by F. Holme." Besides the English and Latin names some of the pages bear MS. remarks on the identity of the species and short criticisms on the figures, which, however, in most cases are very accurate and easily identifiable.

Frederick Holme, who appears to have had the principal share in naming the plates, was a Medical Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He died in 1849, and I am not sure that I ever saw him; but I well recollect that Strickland used to speak of him as a "good ornithologist," and in the "*Strickland Collection of Birds*," now in the University Museum of Zoology at Cambridge, there are five or six specimens labelled as received from "*F. Holme*"*.

Prof. Newton has kindly examined for me Strickland's correspondence, now in the Museum at Cambridge, and has found several letters from Holme to Strickland referring to

* See '*Catalogue of the Strickland Collection of Birds*,' by O. Salvin (Cambridge, 1882), Introduction, p. xi, and nos. 890, 1457, 1566, 1759, and 1819.

these drawings. He has also pointed out to me that Holme was a frequent contributor to the 'Zoologist' (1843 to 1845), as will be seen by reference to that journal.

Strickland, who took his degree at Oxford, and after 1846, until his death in 1853, was a constant resident there, giving lectures as "Reader in Geology," had, of course, every opportunity of studying these drawings, and was evidently associated with Holme in arranging and naming them. On reference to Jardine's 'Memoirs of Hugh Edwin Strickland' (London, 1858), the following passage will be found (p. cxcvii) in a letter addressed by Strickland to Edward Forbes (dated April 20th, 1842) :—

"I saw lately at Oxford a collection of unpublished drawings made by Dr. Sibthorp forty years ago in Greece and Cyprus, and among the birds are many not recorded as European."

As regards Gould's share in the transaction, I suspect that it was small. He was, however, consulted on the subject by Holme, as we know from the Strickland correspondence. Besides this, I remember that Gould came to Oxford on a visit to Strickland some time in 1846 or 1847. I was resident as an undergraduate at Corpus at that time, and I well recollect the satisfaction with which, as a youngster in ornithology, I received an invitation to breakfast from Strickland and his wife (who were then living in lodgings in Merton Lane) "to meet Mr. Gould." This was my first introduction to "John Gould the Birdman"—one of the most remarkable personages I have ever known in the course of a long life. It was probably on this occasion, I think, that Gould was consulted by Strickland as to the determination of those of the Sibthorpean drawings to which his initials are attached.

With regard to the drawings themselves, 114 in number, as already stated, illustrating about 100 species, I think that it is hardly worth while to print a list of them, as there are no localities or any points of *original* information attached to them, and we know that they were not arranged and named until fifty years after their execution. But I conjecture that the greater number of them were made in Cyprus, where,

or in the other adjoining islands of the Levant, Sibthorp and his artist stayed five weeks in 1787. As a rule, I may say that all the species figured by Sibthorp are well-known inhabitants of South-eastern Europe, but I will offer a few remarks on some of them.

Drawing 27 is named "*Lanius nubicus* Licht. = *L. personatus* Temm. Pl. Col. 256, fig. 2," and the remark is added, "Native of Egypt and Nubia, hitherto unrecorded in Europe." The plate undoubtedly represents *Lanius nubicus*, which is a very well-marked species; but, whatever may have been the case when the remark was written, this Shrike is now well known to be a regular summer visitor to Greece (cf. Dresser, B. Eur. iii. p. 416), and Dr. Guillemard found it nesting in Cyprus (Lilford, 'Ibis,' 1888, p. 312). It was probably in Cyprus that Sibthorp met with it.

Drawing 29 is labelled "Ring Ouzel—*Merula torquata*," and represents that well-known bird. It is, perhaps, surprising that Sibthorp should have got hold of an example of this Thrush, but both Lindermayer and Von der Mühle state that it occurs in Greece, though very rarely, and, according to Shelley, it even goes to Egypt in winter. *Turdus torquatus* is also well known to cross the western Mediterranean and to visit Algeria in winter.

Drawing 38 is marked "Olive-tree Warbler, *Salicaria olivetorum*," and was probably so labelled by Strickland, who gave it its name in 1837 from specimens obtained by himself in the island of Zante. Now we become aware that this fine Warbler was known to Sibthorp as long ago as 1787, and was figured by Bauer. We do not know exactly where Sibthorp obtained his specimens, but *Hypolais olivetorum*, as it is now usually called, is common in Corfu and on many parts of the mainland of Greece during the summer.

The Snow-Finch (*Montifringilla nivalis*) is, again, a species which one would not have expected to find figured in the present work, but it is undoubtedly represented in drawing 65. It is found, however, according to Canon Tristram, on the mountains of the Lebanon and also on the higher ranges of the Balkans (*Reiser*); it is quite likely, therefore, that it

may occur on the mountains of Northern Greece, where the Chough (*Fregilus graculus*), also figured by Sibthorp (Drawing 66), was probably likewise met with*.

I now think that I have said enough to call the attention of ornithologists to this remarkable work, which is well worthy of inspection by all students of our science who may visit Oxford. I am sure that Prof. Vines, F.R.S., the Sherardian Professor of Botany, who now occupies the Chair once held by Dr. Sibthorp, will be pleased to shew it to anyone interested in the subject. But before concluding this article, I must say a few words concerning Sibthorp himself, best known, no doubt, to botanists by his 'Flora Græca,' but also to be honoured by zoologists for his intention of following it up, as we now know, with a 'Fauna Græca.'

John Sibthorp, as we are informed by Mr. Druce in the introduction to his 'Flora of Oxfordshire,' was born at Oxford in 1758, and, after finishing his education at Magdalen School and Lincoln College, and taking the degrees of M.A. and M.D., succeeded his father as "Sherardian Professor of Botany in the University of Oxford," in 1783. Soon after this he planned an expedition to Greece for natural-history purposes, and in aid of it secured the services of the excellent draughtsman Ferdinand Bauer†. In March, 1786, they left Vienna together, and first proceeded to Crete, where in June they found flowers "abundant and in great beauty." Subsequently, after touching at several islands in the Archipelago, they visited Athens and Smyrna, ascended the Bithynian Olympus, and at length reached Constantinople, where they passed the winter of 1786-7.

* A letter just received from Herr Reiser informs me that he will include the Snow-Finch in his new volume on the Birds of Greece, having met with it on the highest ranges of Mount Vardusia in Phthiotis.

† Ferdinand Bauer afterwards became draughtsman to the great botanist, Robert Brown, and accompanied him during Flinders's voyage to Australia in the 'Investigator' (1801-5). In the Library of the British Museum of Natural History at South Kensington there are 49 drawings of animals and 203 of plants made by Bauer during this voyage.

In March, 1787, Sibthorp and his draughtsman joined company with Captain Emery and sailed for Cyprus, taking the islands of Scio, Mytilene, Cos, and Rhodes on their way. A stay of five weeks in Cyprus, as we are informed by Mr. Druce, enabled Sibthorp to draw up in manuscript a Flora and Fauna of that island. The "Flora," we are told, comprehended 616 species of Plants, the "Fauna" 18 Mammals, 85 Birds, 19 Amphibians, and 100 Fishes. I suspect that many of the drawings of birds in the third volume of the '*Fauna Græca*' were made by Bauer on this occasion; but they were no doubt added to at various places on the mainland of Greece, where Dr. Sibthorp passed the whole summer of 1787, returning to England at the end of that year. Sibthorp was well received by his brothers in science on his return, and, though weak in health, was urged by Sir Joseph Banks, Mr. Dryander, and other friends to undertake another expedition for the purpose of rendering his work more complete. Accordingly in 1794 he set out on a second tour, and visited various places in Asia Minor, Greece, and its islands. During this expedition, which lasted till the autumn of 1795, Sibthorp caught a severe chill, from which, in fact, he never recovered. The climates of Devonshire and Bath were tried in vain, and he died of consumption at Bath in February 1796, at the early age of thirty-eight. Few names have a better claim for recognition among the martyrs of science than that of John Sibthorp.

Sibthorp by his will left an estate in Oxfordshire for the purpose of finishing and publishing his '*Flora Græca*.' This task was accomplished by Sir J. E. Smith, who drew up the descriptions and characters of the plants, Sibthorp having only sketched out the plan of the work. But unfortunately, as we see, no provision was made for the completion and publication of the '*Fauna Græca*,' for Sibthorp was primarily a botanist. But the zoological drawings of Bauer, arranged and bound in three volumes, as already mentioned, are still carefully preserved in the library attached to the Botanical Gardens at Oxford.