

## XXVIII.—Letters, Announcements, &amp;c.

We have received the following letters, addressed to the Editors of 'The Ibis':—

Australian Museum, Sydney,  
October 25, 1877.

GENTLEMEN,—Permit me to remark, for the benefit of your readers, that, among the specimens of *Eclectus polychlorus* which I selected for this Museum from a large series made by the Rev. George Brown in New Ireland are several which I think will at least throw some light on the question respecting the sexes of the "red" and "green" birds. *First*, then, I have before me a young *red-and-blue* bird, evidently not long from the nest. There is no trace of green feathers on this specimen, except on the *outer margins* of some of the wing-quills, where this colour is common to both the "red" and the "green" birds. The sex of this specimen was not determined. *Secondly*, there is in the series an apparently quite adult bird in the *red-and-violet* plumage (*E. linnæi*), in which the *bill is becoming yellow*, and there is also a *patch of crimson* among the *blue under wing-coverts*; the axillaries are tinged and margined with *green*; and there are several feathers tipped with red on the sides; some of the *flank-feathers* are margined with *green*, as are three or four of the adjacent *upper tail-coverts*; and the *sixth secondary quill* on the outer web near the base has a spot of green; and several of the scapularies are tinged with the same colour at their bases.

From these facts it would appear that the young, perhaps of both sexes, are *red-and-blue* from the nest, and that they retain this state of plumage for a considerable time, after which the *males* assume the *green* plumage, with red sides and under wing-coverts.

Yours &c.,  
E. P. RAMSAY.

[Mr. Brown writes (24th Feb. 1878) to Mr. Sclater:—

"I have satisfied myself that I had been led to make a very inaccurate assertion in one of my letters to you as regards *Eclectus polychlorus* and *E. linnæi*. They are un-

doubtedly the male and female of the one species; and I am very sorry that I stated so positively (*cf.* P. Z. S. 1877, p. 107) that they were not. I must, however, plead in extenuation that, when my attention was drawn to the question, I requested the young man (Cockerell) whom I employed as collector to examine each bird carefully; and he assured me most positively that he had done so, and had marked specimens of each as male and female. As I now, however, skin all the birds myself, I think you may depend on both sex and locality being in every specimen properly marked.”]

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9th May, 1878.

SIRS,—In May 1877 I wrote to you (*vide* ‘Ibis,’ 1877, p. 397) respecting an immature Falcon captured off Socotra, and living in the Menagerie of the Zoological Society, which had been supposed to be an example of *Falco peregrinator* (*vide* ‘Ibis,’ 1877, p. 149).

I again inspected this specimen about a week since, and found that its assumption of adult plumage is now so far advanced, especially on the breast, as to leave no doubt of the bird being a male of *Falco peregrinus*, and not referable to any of the nearly-allied species from which it was difficult to distinguish it in immature plumage.

I am yours &c.,

J. H. GURNEY.

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London, 30th May, 1878.

SIRS,—Through the kindness of Mr. Salvin I have had an opportunity of examining the type of *Bradypterus platyurus* of Swainson, which is now in the Museum of the University of Cambridge. Dresser, in his ‘Birds of Europe’ (March 1876), in his article on Cetti’s Warbler, expresses the opinion, after “critically examining and comparing Swainson’s type of *Bradypterus platyurus*,” that “there is not a shadow of doubt that it is nothing but Cetti’s Warbler.” As this specimen was the bird on which Swainson founded the genus *Bradypterus*, the correctness of its identification becomes a matter of some importance. Ornithological *statute law* pro-

vides that where the description of a genus or species is not sufficient for its identification, the name of such genus or species should be ignored in favour of the earliest name which is accompanied by a sufficient description. The practice of ornithologists has, however, established a rider to this statute, which we may call ornithological *judges' law*. According to this uncoded law a name may stand upon the type specimen, if such exists; and the type specimen is allowed to eke out any deficiency, and to correct any slight error in the description, and even, in certain very exceptional cases, to condone its absence.

I find that Swainson's bird has too long a bill for Cetti's Warbler. The culmen measures '6, whereas the culmen of Cetti's Warbler varies from '45 to '55. It is also much more buffy or more rufous on the flanks and under tail-coverts than is usual in the European bird. The under tail-coverts are of a uniform coffee-brown, whereas those of Cetti's Warbler are tipped with white. Finally, "there cannot be a shadow of doubt" that the specimen in question is *not* Cetti's Warbler, because it has unmistakably *twelve* tail-feathers, the European bird possessing only *ten*.

After "critically examining and comparing Swainson's type of *Bradypterus platyurus*" with Levaillant's plate of "Le Pavaneur" in his *Hist. Nat. des Ois. d'Afr.* iii. p. 94, plate 122, I see no reason why Swainson's identification should not be correct. I have skins in my collection from the Transvaal almost exact duplicates of Swainson's type. The genus *Bradypterus*, as applied to Cetti's Warbler, therefore falls to the ground, and must be retained for the African bird. We cannot, however, retain Swainson's specific name, which dates from 1837 (*Swains. Class. of Birds*, ii. p. 241), inasmuch as Vieillot in 1817 (*Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat.* xi. p. 206) had already founded his *Sylvia brachyptera* upon "Le Pavaneur" of Levaillant. The African bird, therefore (which is, by the way, better known to ornithologists by a name of still more recent date, *Bradypterus sylvaticus*, Sund.), must rejoice in the uneuphonious title *Bradypterus brachypterus* (Vieill.).

Cetti's Warbler was first figured in the *Planches Enlumi-*

nées (no. 655, fig. 2), as *la bonscarle de Provence*. Upon this figure Gmelin founded his *Motacilla sylvia*, var.  $\gamma$ . *Curruca fulvescens*, in 1788. Ornithological judges' law does not, however, recognize the varieties of Gmelin; and we pass on to 1820, where we find our bird reappearing as *Sylvia cetti* of La Marmora. In 1829 the genus *Potamodus* was established by Kaup; and Cetti's Warbler has sometimes appeared as *Potamodus cetti* (Marm.). This latter genus, however, was founded upon *Sylvia fluviatilis*, by which Kaup doubtless meant an *Acrocephalus* or a *Locustella*. Bonaparte was the first to establish a separate genus expressly for *Sylvia cetti*; and he having raised the specific name into a generic one, we are again driven elsewhere to find the second oldest name. This appears to be *Sylvia sericea* (Natt.) apud Temm. (Man. d'Orn. i. p. 197); so that our bird appears in Bonaparte's 'Birds of Europe and North America' (p. 12) as *Cettia sericea* (Natt.)—a name to which it appears to be entitled with the alteration in the authority to "(Temm.)," no publication of the name by Natterer himself having taken place.

Yours &c.

HENRY SEEBOHM.

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Brankston Grange, Culross, N.B.,  
19th May, 1878.

SIRS,—I beg to send you the following notice of three recent occurrences of the Stockdove (*Columba ænas*) in Scotland, one in Stirlingshire, and the other two in this neighbourhood (Southern Perthshire), which may be interesting to the readers of 'The Ibis,' as only two instances of its occurrence north of the Tweed have hitherto been recorded, one of which is extremely doubtful (for both, *vide* Gray's 'Birds of the West of Scotland,' p. 219).

The first of these specimens I have now to record was shot on 20th March last, as it flew from a tree close to Alva House, Stirlingshire. It was sent for preservation by the game-keeper who shot it; but the sex was not ascertained.

The second bird, a female, was shot on 25th March, on the estate of Tulliallan, adjoining this one (Westgrange), by a

gamekeeper. It has been placed in the Museum of the Alloa Society of Natural Science.

The remaining specimen, a male, was shot on this estate on 2nd April by my keeper. In both the the latter cases the birds were shot when feeding on newly-sown grain-fields in company with Wood-pigeons. From the close vicinity of the places where the two last-mentioned birds were shot (only about a mile distant from each other), they may have possibly been a mated pair.

Yours &c.,

JOHN J. DALGLEISH.

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SIRS,—In a note on the genus *Artamus*, recently published in Rowley's 'Ornithological Miscellany' (part xiv. p. 179) I observe that Mr. Sharpe has rejected the Linnean specific title *leucorhynchus* (founded on Brisson's *Pie-grièche de Manille*), as well as Scopoli's title of *philippinus*, and Gmelin's *dominicanus* (founded on Sonnerat's *Pie-grièche dominiquaine des Philippines*), for the Philippine Swallow-Shrike, and adopted Valenciennes's more recent title, *leucogaster*, bestowed on a bird from Timor, although he tells us (p. 179) that he considers the titles *leucorhynchus* and *leucogaster* to be synonymous. Thus a title which has been current with all writers for over a hundred years is upset. Mr. Sharpe remarks "so long as there is a doubt about the Brissonian bird from the Philippines, I think the name ought to be discarded, though Lord Tweeddale says that 'he has no doubt that from it Brisson and Sonnerat took their descriptions.' Here I can only say 'not proven!'" In my humble opinion it is "proven" by overwhelming evidence that Brisson did describe the Philippine species. Let us sift the evidence—first as to the *patria* of the type, secondly as to whether the description is sufficient to show the identity of the type.

Brisson (undoubtedly a most accurate author) distinctly states that the species to which his type belonged "is found in the neighbourhood of Manilla, capital of the island of Luzon, whence it was sent to M. l'Abbé Aubry, who has

preserved it in his cabinet." "The inhabitants of Manilla call it Langni-Langnaien." Brisson called it *Lanius manillensis*.

Now as to his description of the specimen, which we know he had before him; for two asterisks precede the title. He says that "the head, throat, neck, scapulars, wing-feathers, and those of the tail are blackish" ("noirâtres" in the French, "*nigricantes*" in the Latin), that is, blackish or swarthy, but not jet-black, nor even black. Mr. Sharpe says that the title "*leucorhynchus*" cannot be retained for the Philippine bird, as its colours are stated to be "black and white." They are so stated to be by Sonnerat describing other species, not so, as I have shown, by Brisson. Mr. Sharpe goes on to say that the question is somewhat complicated by the fact that there are certain black-and-white *Artami*, such as *A. melaleucus* and *A. maximus*, but is of opinion that "it is highly improbable that either of these species formed the subject of Brisson or Sonnerat's descriptions." It is not necessary to prove to what species Sonnerat's type belonged; but it is clear that neither of the species above named could have been before Brisson; for the first is from New Caledonia, and the other from New Guinea, and Brisson describes the colour as being *blackish*, not black. The colouring of many examples of the Philippine species (and there is only one species known to inhabit the Philippines) is blackish. "Noirâtre" or *nigricans* are terms which fairly convey the general tone of the dark colour of the phase of plumage exhibited by the Philippine bird; for, as I have shown elsewhere (P. Z. S. 1877, p. 544), Philippine individuals occur wearing a dark smoky-brown plumage. We have thus the fact that Brisson circumstantially stated the origin of his type specimen, and that the description of it given by him is strictly applicable to at least one of the styles of colouring which the Philippine bird, as known to us, very frequently assumes. It may also be added that *A. leucorhynchus* is one of the commonest and most widely-spread birds in the Philippines. Mr. Everett writes that you see it everywhere. And although it is unnecessary to resort to probabilities, these are enormously on the side of Brisson's specimens having come from Manilla.

Mr. Sharpe makes no endeavour to show what Brisson's bird may have been. About the genus there is no doubt, and yet it is the only species of the genus described by Brisson. There were only two species possible for him to have described. One, *A. fuscus*, is out of the question; the other is this Philippine species, with its wide range over the whole Malayan archipelago, Celebes, the Moluccas, parts of New Guinea with several of its islands, and parts of Australia. If a "black and white" species like *A. melaleucus* existed in the Philippines, as Drs. Hartlaub and Finsch at one time thought (P. Z. S. 1868, pp. 116, 117), it could not be Brisson's bird; for he described his species as being blackish. But Mr. Sharpe also admits that the archipelago is inhabited by only one species.

It is not my object to revise critically this monograph of the *Artami*. But when Mr. Sharpe says, "what the bird from the Pelew Islands is, cannot be determined without a specimen," and when we find this bird altogether omitted from his list of species composing the genus, it seems desirable to note that it has been described by Dr. Finsch (Journ. Mus. Geoffr. Hft. xiii. p. 41) as a distinct species, under the title of *A. pelewensis*, and that, quite lately, Dr. Finsch (P. Z. S. 1877, p. 739) has referred his readers to that account for the differences that distinguish it from *A. melaleucus*. It may be added to Mr. Sharpe's notes (*t. c.*) that the Celebesian form of *A. leucorhynchus* has been entitled *A. celebensis* by the late Dr. Brüggemann. A species from the "Inseln des stillen Oceans" has been described by the same author as new, under the title of *A. brevipes*, which, on Dr. Brüggemann's authority, I may state, is nothing but *A. fuscus*. It may be added that the same author, in the belief that *A. insignis* was the true *A. monachus*, has given the latter species the title of *A. spectabilis* (Ann. N. H. ser. 5, i. p. 349).

Yours obediently,

TWEEDDALE.

Yester, 24th May, 1878.

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Captain Blakiston, writing from Hakodate, Japan, Dec. 30th, 1877, calls our attention to the following errors in Mr.

Swinhoe's last article upon his Birds from Hakodate ('Ibis,' 1876, p. 330) :—

P. 331. *Hirundo americana*?, from Kamtchatka, line 13, read *vent* for "neck." As this specimen has the whole underparts bright chestnut with a dark breast-collar, am I not right in considering it the American bird?

P. 331. *Ceryle rudis*. A mistake. I sent Swinhoe a specimen of it. If you can find this, please see if it is not *H. coromanda*. It agrees with the 'Fauna-Japonica' figure of *H. coromanda major*.

P. 333. *Schoeniclus pallasii* is also a mistake, I believe. As far as I can find out, we have only *S. pyrrhulinus*, Swinhoe.

P. 333. *Uragus sibiricus* also does not stand. Swinhoe, more recently ('Ibis,' 1877, p. 145), has made this bird out to be *Carpodacus roseus*.

P. 334. The note concerning *Tringa damacensis* was intended to refer to *Rhynchæa bengalensis*.

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*Rediscovery of Polyplectron emphanes*.—The discovery by Mr. Everett (Lord Tweeddale's collector) of the true home of *Polyplectron emphanes*\*, in the Island of Palawan, which was announced at a recent meeting of the Zoological Society, is of much interest, as, though this fine bird has been known for the last fifty years, its true *patria* has remained a mystery. We may even hope to ascertain before long the locality of *Pavo nigripennis*, a bird found in many of our farmyards, but of which the original *sedes* is a problem yet unsolved.

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*Proposed B.O.U. List of British Birds*.—At their recent annual general meeting, the members of the British Ornithologists' Union appointed a Committee to draw up a list of British birds, according to the most approved principles of modern nomenclature. The Committee have already held

\* Temminck, who was no classical scholar, writes this name "*emphanum*." But the Greek being ἐμφανής, neuter ἐμφανές, the corresponding Latin term should be *emphanes*, unless it may be supposed to be the neuter of ἐμφαίνω, when "*emphaenon*" would be orthographically correct.



their first meeting, and have, we believe, decided on a plan of action. They will, however, be glad to receive suggestions from any member of the B. O. U., or other ornithologist, which may be addressed to the Secretary of the B. O. U. at 6 Tenterden Street. -

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*Dresser's 'Birds of Europe.'*—So many ornithologists are interested in this important work, that we are pleased to be able to give the following particulars concerning the prospects of its completion. Sixty-six parts have been issued up to the present time, and parts 67 and 68 are ready, all but the plates. It will take about six more parts to complete the work, and these will (barring accidents) be issued before the close of the year. Mr. Wolf has contributed several sketches, and Mr. Neale a few; and these, with what Mr. Keulemans has lately done, will, it is believed, keep the illustrations going. When the regular numbers are finished, there will still remain the introduction, general index, &c., together with a small supplement to correct errors and add additional information lately received. This, which it will take several months to prepare, it is purposed to issue in a thin volume, which will be so far useful that it will be available as an index, without having to take down every volume when hunting for a reference. In the meanwhile, the main portion of the work can be arranged and bound according to the instructions which will be issued with the last part.

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*The Dyke-Road Museum, Brighton.*—No naturalist who goes to Brighton should omit to visit Mr. E. T. Booth's new museum in the Dyke Road. It contains a series of about 300 cases of British birds. Each species is placed in a separate case, and the specimens (male, female, young, and often nest and eggs) are arranged in what the owner considers to be their natural attitudes, with imitations of appropriate scenery in the background, often copied from the actual spot in which the specimens themselves were procured. The most wonderful

feature in the collection is that the specimens have in every case been procured by Mr. Booth himself during 23 years which he has devoted to forming it.

It would be easy to criticise the mounting of the specimens, and their attitudes in some of the cases ; but, taking the collection as a whole, we are sure that it will meet with general approval from ornithologists. Would that the authorities of our National Collection would take a hint from Mr. Booth, and, when they proceed to fit up their new public gallery at South Kensington, adopt a somewhat similar plan ! A series of well-selected typical forms of bird-life displayed in this fashion would instruct and interest the public ; whereas the present plan of exhibiting some thousands of badly-mounted (and, too often, unnamed) specimens crowded together in series of parallel rows only disgusts them.

We sincerely hope that but few, if any, of the present inhabitants of the Bird-gallery in Great Russell Street will find their way into the new galleries at South Kensington, but will be replaced by new and fresh specimens mounted in accordance with Mr. Booth's plan.

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*Death of Dr. Brüggemann.*—We regret to have to announce the death of Dr. F. Brüggemann. Dr. Brüggemann was a native of Bremen, and studied at Jena, where he was for several years assistant to Prof. Haeckel. His earliest publications were on entomological subjects ; but, later, he published an account of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Bremen. He was especially interested in ornithology, and, amongst other papers on this subject, published several on the Birds of Celebes and Borneo (see 'Ibis,' 1877, p. 126, and 1878, pp. 198 et 377). On the recommendation of Prof. Haeckel, Dr. Brüggemann was engaged last year by Dr. Günther to arrange and catalogue the collection of Corals in the British Museum. Whilst in the midst of this undertaking he died suddenly at his lodgings, on the night of Saturday, April 6th, of hæmorrhage from the lungs.