XLVIII.—*The Birds of Calcutta, collected and described by*
CARL J. SUNDEVALL*.

[Continued from p. 407.]

58. *Falco tinnunculus*, L.

Our common Kestrel is also indigenous in Bengal. I recognised it once clearly, but procured none in that country. A young male however was taken December 5 on board ship, near the equator in the Indian Ocean, about 100 miles from Ceylon†, and another young specimen was sent home from Java by the forementioned Dr. Mellerborg. Both these birds showed, on a comparison with Swedish specimens of the second year, not the slightest difference either in colour or dimensions. This, like all small species of hawks or falcons, is called in Bengal *Sikhrie*, like the cuckoo (*supra*, no. 46). The same name is employed by Levaillant (Ois. Afr. no. 30) for a falcon which seems to be but slightly different from the year-old *F. tinnunculus*. He calls it *Chiquera* from a label which a Frenchman at Chandernagor had attached to the bird. This is evidently the same name, whose pronunciation has been somewhat differently modified. One may detect the same name changed in many other ways. For instance, under *Cuculus* no. 6 in Lath. Gen. Hist., it is written *Sercea*, *Sirkeer*, and *Surkool*. We may hence judge of the value of our information on the language of the natives, especially when they come through England; all the three names quoted, when pronounced in the English manner, are more like the correct sound than is apparent from the spelling.

59. *Falco peregrinator*, sp. nov. (obs. non ad Calcutta visus).

Niger; subtus ferrugineus, antice pallidior: pectore longitudinaliter nigro-maculato, abdomine, crisso, tibiisque irregulariter nigro-fasciatis; cauda alas superante. (Maxime affinis *F. peregrino*.)

♀ (in Mari indico d. 19 Junii) superne tota, cum alis, lateribus capitis usque infra oculos et macula genarum, latiori quam in *F. peregrino*, pure nigra, absque marginibus pallidis plumarum. Supercilia nulla distincte colorata. Gula et collum antice albedo-ferruginea striolis tenuibus nigris: colore rufo et latitudine striolarum deorsum auctis. Latera corporis, venter, tectrices alæ inferiores et tibiæ crebre, saturate rufo nigroque maculato fasciata. Alæ nigrae: remiges maculis pogonii interioris transversis, fulvis. Penna 1^a et 3^a æquales. Rectrices fere æquales, nigrae, margine apicis albidæ; pogonium internum maculis 9 angustis, transversis rufescentibus; pogonium externum maculis obsoletis, cinerascenti micantibus. Pedes validissimi, toti flavi. Rostrum fuscens. Cera et orbita

* Translated from the 'Physiographiska Sällskapets Tidskrift' by H. E. Strickland, M.A.

† The following day *Cypselus affinis* (*supra*, no. 40) was procured.

fusco-flavescentes. Iris nigro-fusca. Oculi magni, valde convexi, prominuli. Longit. 18 poll. sv. (in cute asservata cauda $2\frac{1}{4}$ poll. ultra alas). Ala flexa 330 mill., tarsus 47, digitus medius 53, cum ungue 68; cauda 180. Rostrum e fauce 31, altit. 20, cum cranio 70. Cubitus 98. Statura *F. peregrini*, vel paullo robustior; rostrum præsertim crassius et convexius apparet; alæ, ratione reliquarum partium, paullo breviores.

On my homeward voyage from Bengal I obtained this handsome Falcon in $6^{\circ} 20'$ N. between Ceylon and Sumatra, rather nearer the last-named island, and at least seventy [Swedish] miles from the nearest land, viz. the Nicobar Islands. It settled upon the edge of a sail, whence it was shot down. I have only seen the specimen described, and have procured no information of any similar bird, either in books or collections. It might perhaps be regarded as a tropical variety of *Falco peregrinus*, but the pure black on the upper parts, the shorter wings and unusually large projecting eyes give this bird a marked distinction from the common forms of that species. *F. peregrinus* occurs moreover in New Holland, gray as with us, according to Vig. and Horsf., Linn. Trans. vol. xiii.* It seems that a considerable number of birds annually fly across from Sumatra and Ceylon, though they are separated by a sea of more than 200 [Swedish] miles in width. Only during my voyage through this channel I procured ten or twelve birds, most of which are mentioned above, met with half-way between these two islands. All sailors have opportunities of seeing land birds at very considerable distances from shore, and it seems not incredible that certain strong-flying species may cross the ocean, even between America and the old continent, though probably most of those which venture upon such a journey perish before they have proceeded half-way. Among other instances it may be mentioned that Catesby, in his last voyage to America, met with an owl in the midst of the ocean in 26° N. He does not tell us which species it was†.

60. *Falco melanopterus*, Daud.; Lath. Suppl. 2; Horsf. Jav. Linn. Tr. xiii.; Glog. Eur. p. 85.—Le Blac, *Levaill. Afr.* 37, 36. *Elanus cæsius*, Sav. *Eg.* 98. pl. 11. *El. melanopterus*, Leach, *Zool. Misc.* iii. p. 4; Vig. et Horsf. Linn. Tr. xv. *Falco dispar*, Temm. *Pl. Col.* 319 (var. Americ.).

* The New Holland bird is however distinct from *peregrinus*; it is the *F. melanogenys*, Gould.—H. E. S.

† *F. peregrinator* appears to migrate across the ocean to great distances from India. I possess a specimen which I refer to this species, procured in 1833 on board ship between the Mauritius and Madagascar. M. Sundevall gives a good figure of the species, and it is also represented under the name of *F. shaheen* by Mr. Jerdon, in his 'Illustrations of Indian Ornithology,' plates 12 and 28.—H. E. S.

Albus, supra cinereus, tectricibus alarum minoribus nigris. Ungues teretes, remigum 2^{da} reliquis longior.

♂ (Serampore d. 16 Febr.) albus supra totus pallide incanus, fronte alba. Orbita antice cum lineola superciliari nigra. Alæ extus colore dorsi, vitta antica nigra; pennis primariis fuscis extus obscure canis, subtus et margine albis; caudam æquantes. Cauda minime furcata: omnino æqualis; alba, pennis 2 mediis canis. Rostrum nigrum basi flavum debile. Lora et mentum setosa. Pedes flavi, crassi, cute molli, quasi spongiosa tota reticulata. Digiiti fissi, vix divergentes, subtus læves. Long. $12\frac{1}{2}$ poll. Ala 254 millim., tarsus 31, digitus medius 30, cum ungue 42, cauda 124, rostrum e fronte 15.

Few land birds seem to be more widely spread over the earth than this species, which is found in Ulimaroa and the Indian Islands, in all Southern Asia, all Africa, South Europe, and all the warmer parts of America*. I only saw one specimen, which was shot on the top of a tree. The stomach was quite thin, and contained remains of a bird; it had moreover a strong smell of fish, but no remains of them were found. Nor was any trace seen of insects, which are asserted to be the sole food of this bird. Yet at that season there was no want of opportunity for an insectivorous bird to satisfy itself with grasshoppers, crickets, &c., with which the stomachs of most of the birds which I opened in Bengal were filled. This species also is called *Sikhrie* like the Kestrel, Cuckoos, &c.

61. *Falco pondicerianus*, L., Lath. no. 46; Horsf. Jav. et Raffl. Sum. Linn. Tr. xiii.—*Haliaëtus pondicerianus* recentiorum.

Rufus, capite, collo, pectoreque albis, limite definito. Adultus (Febr.—Apr.). Rostrum albidum; pedes flavi. Plumæ capitis collique angustatæ, rhachide tenui nigra. Albedo pectoris fere ad pedes extensa. Remiges primariæ nigræ, basi ad medium rufæ; cubitales rufæ, intus striis quibusdam transversis nigris. Cauda tota rufa. Magnitudo *Buteonis*; ala 360 mill., tarsus 50, digitus medius præter unguem 30. Rostrum simile *F. nævii*: majus quam *Buteonis*. Nares subrotundæ paullo longitudinales. Remex 4^a reliquis longior. Cauda rotundata, alas æquans. Tarsi antice scutis parvis; basi tantum plumati. Digiiti toti scutati. (Affinis *Milvo*, nec *F. albicilla*.) Juniores (Febr.—Apr.) similes adultis, coloribus tamen paullo obscurioribus ornati.

This handsome bird of prey is known by the name *Bramin-hawk*, in Bengalese *Bramini-tjill*. The Hindoos regard it as a Bramin among the hawks, or of a better caste than the others, probably because it is the handsomest, and have a superstitious veneration for it in the same way as the peasantry with us regard the Stork and the Swallow. It occurs also in the Indian mytho-

* The American bird, *Elanus dispar*, is distinct from *E. melanopterus*.—H. E. S.

logy, and is one of Vishnu's attributes. This is one of the fortunate animals which according to their doctrine of transmigration contains the soul of a Bramin which is on the point of again entering into the human form. The Bramin-hawk is very common near the river, especially about Calcutta, but it is not found so abundantly as *Falco ater*. Further down, where the water begins to be salt, and the country is less inhabited, it is not to be seen. It seems to be found in all India and is often brought from Java. It flies in circles over the water, whence it carries off all kinds of floating offal, morsels of flesh, entrails, &c., perhaps also fish, but I never saw it or the following species pounce on entire corpses which lay upon the banks or floated in the stream. Their food was seized by the feet, and was commonly carried off to some tree or to the mast of a ship, to be there devoured, but small pieces are also eaten during flight. Their cry is a somewhat rough Hě ě ě ě ě - - -, almost like that of a horse or a goat. They are seen about Calcutta the whole year. According to a statement in Latham's Gen. Hist., they lay two or three eggs in trees in March and April. A number of Indian names for this bird are there enumerated.

62. *Falco ater*, Gm., Lath. no. 38; Glog. Eur. p. 82.—*Milvus ater* rec.

Fuscus, cauda longitudine reliqui corporis leviter furcata, alas paullo superante, fusca, subtus pallidius fasciata; plumis capitis latius oblongis.

♂ (junior? Febr.) totus fuscescens, pectore albido striolato, non ferrugineo, capite albido fuscoque longitudinaliter maculato. Gula albida. Longit. 21 poll. Ala 430 mill., tarsus 50, cauda 260, $1\frac{1}{2}$ poll. ultra alas.—♀ major &c., ut descriptio Glogeri cit.

This species, which is spread over all the warmer regions of the old continent, is one of the most abundant near Calcutta. Its mode of life thoroughly resembles that of the Bramin-hawk. The cry is sharper, not unlike our kite's, but more interrupted, much like *heheheheeee* - - - ! This species also remains stationary all the year. Both this and the last have a great resemblance, in their mode of flight and in all their habits, to *Falco buteo* as well as to *F. milvus*, but they are chiefly seen near inhabited places, and are not shy, as they are not persecuted. They are often seen sitting in trees or on roofs in the city. Both are stated to build on the stems of lofty trees. *F. ater* is named simply *tjeel*, which corresponds to our name *hawk*.

63. *Falco* . . . Fuscus, cauda longa, alba, brevius furcata, apicibus nigris. Magnitudine prioris.

I saw this hawk twice only, in the month of April, flying near Calcutta, but could not procure it. The flight and general

appearance were like those of the former, but the tail appeared longer.

Falco buteo? an *F. asiaticus*, Lath.? Near Sucsagor, above Calcutta, I twice saw (on March 22 and 23) a hawk which I am disposed to regard as our common Buzzard, which it resembled in size, colour, flight, and all its actions. The head was pale, with a dark band through the eyes. On one occasion it settled on a stone twenty-five ells from me, just as one of my gun-barrels, loaded with large shot, had been fired off. In the other barrel there was only sparrow-shot, so that I despaired of hitting it, and aiming straight at the bird, I fired and got nothing.

In the lower parts of the river, in the district of the Sunderbunds, when on my homeward voyage in May, I three times saw a species of bird flying at some distance, which could be nothing but a large bird of prey. It seemed to be little less than an eagle, dark-coloured, beneath white, with pointed wings, and rather smaller anteriorly than is usual with raptorial birds. The flight was like that of an eagle. Could it possibly be allied to *Falco leucopsis*, Bechst.?

I once saw a hawk fly past which I thought I recognised as a full-grown *F. palumbarius*, but I cannot assert it positively. These, and many other species of birds which follow, are only enumerated to draw attention to them.

I often heard Europeans speak of *Eagles*, which would seem not to be rare in this country, and as they asserted of their own knowledge, quite distinct from *Vultures*. Possibly they alluded to *Vultur pondicerianus*, or perhaps the large unknown bird of prey just mentioned. It should be observed that *Ciconia argala* is often called *Eagle* by the English, and the Hindoos who know English believe this bird to be the Eagle of the Europeans.

64. *Vultur bengalensis*, Gm.—Bengal Vulture, Lath. Syn. i. p. 19. t. 1 (fig. mala, eademque in Lath. Gen. Hist.). *Vultur leucocephalus* β , Lath. Syst. i. p. 3 (nec. synonym. Hasselq.). Chaugoun, *Levaill. Afr.* pl. 11 (e Bengaliam; fig. mala, ut ibidem pleræque avium rapacium). (*V. indicus pullus*, Temm.)

Nigro-fuscus, subtus rhachidibus albis striolatus, supra immaculatus, dorso posteriore albo. Collare lanatum, album, colli infimi. Area pectoralis atra. Nares transversæ, lineares. ♂ adultus (Calcutta, Febr.). Caput et collum fuscescentia, subnuda, sparse pilosa. Caput superne fuscescenti pilosum. Occiput et nucha densius albidolanata. Interscapulium et alæ fere pure nigra immaculata. Dorsum posterius ab alis tectum, pure album. Remiges cubitales extus cinerascens. Alæ tectrices inferiores (nec marginales) albæ. Cauda nigra. Gastræum nigro-fuscum, rhachidibus tenuibus, definite albis. Tibia intus alba. Area pectoralis magna, triangularis, aterrima, immaculata, brevissime et densissime plumata; lateribus posticeque

limbo albo-lanato (plerumque occultato) cincta. Collare, cum hoc limbo continuum, tantum postice plumis quibusdam brevibus, laceris ornatum. Pedes et rostrum plumbei.

Longit. 32 poll. sv. Ala 533 mill. ($21\frac{1}{2}$ poll.), cauda 225, tarsus 100. Digitus medius 100, cum ungue 130. Rostrum e fronte horizontaliter 57. Expansio alarum $7\frac{1}{3}$ ped.

♀ (verisim. junior. Calcutta, Febr.). Similis mari sed colores omnes cinerascende-sordidi, minime vero rufescenti-inquinati. Etiam rhachides inferiores sordide albæ. Plumæ dorsi unicolores : anteriores nigro-cinerascetes reliquæ albæ. Tota area pectoralis pure atra. Ala 545 mill. Rostrum e fronte : horizontaliter 53 mill., oblique ad apicem 63. Altitudo maxillæ superioris 23. Tarsus 90. Digitus medius cum ungue 120. Cauda 215.

Juv. ut ♀ sed albedo vix ulla apparet : color omnis cinereo-fuscus, sordide rufescenti-tinctus. Plumæ corporis inferioris stria albida paullo latiore quam rhachide, sed nulla pluma margine rufescens. Dorsi plumæ immaculatæ. Area pectoris fuscescente-nigra, atro-immixta. Collare lanatum sordide album. Ala 532 mill. Ceteræ dimensiones ut fœminæ. Remiges 3 et 4 æquales, reliquis longiores ; cubitales posteriores attingunt apicem alæ. Cauda paullo rotundata, parum excedit alas ; apice detrita, rhachidibus apice nudis spinosa. Pedes reticulati. Tarsi toti nudi. Rostrum simile *Vulturis fulvi* ; non ad oculos usque fissum. Nares angustæ, paullo obliquæ.

Obs. Cel. Temminck in enumeratione *Vulturum* (Pl. Col. livr. 72, et ibd. 89) hunc pro juniore *V. indico* habet, cum verisimiliter tantum juniores *V. bengalenses* vidisse ei contigerit. At juniores utriusque speciei sat similes sunt. Sic etiam Rüppell hanc avem non cognovit (Ann. Sc. Nat. 1830, Dec.). *Vultur indicus*, quem tantum in musæis vidi, similior est *V. fulvo*, et in his a *V. bengalensi* differt : area pectoralis colore dorsi ; collare plumis definitis, oblongis ornatum ; *adultus* fulvus ; *pullus* obscure fuscus, plumis ventris, *etiamque dorsi*, stria media fulva, et plerumque margine fulvo notatis ; area pectoralis immaculata, rufescenti-tincta.

This Vulture occurs around Calcutta the whole year, in great abundance ; everywhere, even in the town, it is found in plenty. They do not strictly live in flocks, but often sit several together in the same tree, and one daily sees great assemblages of them around the corpses lying on the river bank, from which they derive their principal nourishment. Vultures walk with ease, which gives them a remarkable resemblance to turkeys, even when they are fighting for their prey ; they appear equally stupid, and their fights appear to be equally bloodless. The nights and part of the days are passed in trees, where they are often seen sitting motionless with half-expanded wings, most like the Greek representations of winged griffins and sphinxes, which in this respect are evidently modelled after Vultures. They fly remarkably well, with the wings still, often to an incredible height in vast circles, to search for prey, or perhaps more often for pastime and mid-

day recreation. No sound is ever heard from them. They smell strongly of musk, which is still very perceptible, after an interval of nine years, in the stuffed specimens brought home. The Bengalese name is *Sukheni* or *Jidheni* (the accent on the final *i*). I heard no name which resembled the word *Chaugau* adopted by Levaillant, which a Frenchman at Chandernagor had written on the specimen described by him. It is probably based on an incorrect adoption of the name *Sukheni*.

Among hundreds of Vultures which I saw, often only fifteen or twenty ells distant, I perceived none which were yellowish brown, wherefore I presume that the so-coloured *Vultur indicus* never, or rarely, occurs near Calcutta. A small number of them were coloured distinctly black and white like the hen above described. Most of them were grayish like the two others described.

65. *Vultur pondicerianus*, auct., Temm. Pl. Col. 2 (fig. opt.).

Niger, area pectoris concolore, lateribus posticeque latius albo cincta; capite colloque nudis, dilute rubris. Priori paullo minor.

This species is not common, and I did not procure it, but I several times had an opportunity of observing it carefully. It was rather less than the former, and is consequently one of the smaller species of Vulture. It was not distinguished by any special name, and was occasionally seen among other Vultures. It is always, even during flight, easily recognisable by the purer black colour, the red neck, and the large white spots under the body. I never saw it near enough to distinguish the projecting ear-formed folds of skin on the neck.

66. *Columba tigrina*, Temm., Wagl. no. 96.

Fuscescens, dorso griseo guttato, nigro striolato; plumis nuchæ infimæ nigris, apice cordato-incisis, gutta apicis alba. Caput canescens. Alæ breves. Rostrum nigrum; pedes rubri. Corpus subtus immaculatum rubicundo-cinerascens, abdomine crissoque albis. Rectrices laterales apice late cinereæ. Magnit. et statura *Turturis* (♂ ♀ Febr., Martii). Ala 126 mill., cauda 123, tarsus 20, digitus medius 21, cum ungue 26.

This small Dove, which is much like the European Turtle-dove, is very common near Calcutta, and was said to be stationary there. They were seen commonly two or three together, walking on the ground to pluck rice-grain, &c. on which they live. In the stomach were found moreover small snail shells, stones, &c. for trituration of the food. The flight and motions are much like our woodpigeon's, and like it they were very shy, and had a singular faculty of hiding themselves behind branches and leaves in the trees. The note is also like the woodpigeon's and has given rise to the Bengalese name *Ghugu* (the *u* as in German or *ou* in

French). The skin is tender and closely attached to the body as in our pigeons, and the feathers have the same peculiar structure of which I spoke before under the Cuckoos.

67. *Columba livia* var. *domestica*. Tame doves were kept by the natives in most villages in great numbers. They were chiefly of the race common also with us, which most resembles wild pigeons; but as they live more at liberty, without being confined in winter, they acquire their natural blue colour more frequently than with us, with two black bands on the wings. I saw some among them which had the back white, which I never saw among tame pigeons in Sweden. This species is perhaps hardly to be found strictly wild in Bengal, which country is wholly destitute of cliffs and mountains, but it appeared to me that a great portion of them were more or less in a wild state, which seems also to be often the case in South Europe.

68. *Columba* ——. Several species of pigeon were mentioned as being found wild in the country. Among them is one which the Europeans called *Ring-dove*, and which was asserted to be precisely the same as the European species, but I failed in seeing any such. It was said to arrive at certain seasons in great flocks, and then to depart again.

Another small green dove was stated to frequent certain places all the year. It was said to be shy, and difficult to see in the trees. Some which I saw in cages were said to be of this species; it was *Columba superciliaris*, Wagl. (*C. indica*, auct.), which is rather larger than a thrush, reddish gray, with green wings and back, a gray head, with white eyebrows and a cross-band on the sides of the neck, red feet and beak.

[To be continued.]

PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Oct. 13, 1846.—William Yarrell, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair.

“Descriptions of thirteen new species of *Brachiopoda*.” By G. B. Sowerby, F.L.S.

TEREBRATULA NIGRICANS. *Ter. testâ anticè rotundatâ, posticè acuminatâ, tenuiusculâ, nigricante; valvis inæqualibus, radiatim costatis, costis rotundatis; lined marginali rectiusculâ; valvâ dorsali subtrigonâ, depressiusculâ, rotundatâ, lateribus posticis declivibus; foramine magno, haud integro, quadrato; areâ cardinali magnâ, planiusculâ, lateribus rotundatis; deltidiis angustis ad latera foraminis coalescentibus; valvâ ventrali depressâ, transversim*

1847. "XLVIII.—The birds of Calcutta, collected and described by Carl J. Sundevall." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 18, 454–461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/037454809494458>.

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