

XLVII.—*Remarks on a Collection of Australian Drawings of Birds, the Property of the Earl of Derby.* By H. E. STRICKLAND, Esq., M.A.

IN the March Number of the ‘Annals of Nat. Hist.’ Mr. G. R. Gray has given a list of certain Australian birds long since described by Latham, but which, from the brevity and incompleteness of that author’s descriptions, have remained till now in much obscurity. By the aid of the original drawings, from which alone Latham compiled his descriptions, Mr. Gray has been enabled to refer the greater part of these hitherto doubtful species to their true place in the modern system, and by applying the “law of priority” to their specific names has done an act of justice to the father of British ornithologists.

Having had the pleasure of co-operating with Mr. Gray in comparing these drawings with specimens in the British Museum, and having then acquiesced in most of the conclusions to which he arrived, I should not have now referred to them, were it not that the Earl of Derby has kindly permitted me to take these drawings to my own residence, and by a careful comparison of them with specimens in my collection, I have obtained a few additional results.

Mr. Gould has also examined these drawings with much attention, and has communicated his remarks upon them, which, with his permission, I have inserted in the present notice, distinguishing them by the initials J. G.

These water-colour drawings, comprised in three folio volumes, are 225 in number, the first being a landscape in Norfolk Island, the next ten are mammalia, and the rest birds. There is no title-page, date or artist’s name, but the backs are lettered “New South Wales Drawings,” and there is every reason to believe that the whole of them were made in the Australian regions. It has been supposed that the artist was John White, author of the ‘Voyage to New South Wales,’ 4to, London, 1790, soon after which date they came into possession of Mr. A. B. Lambert. Mr. Gould however remarks, “this is probably a mistake; they were perhaps made by some convict. Mr. Lambert told Mr. Prince, upon showing him the drawings some time before his death, that they were made by an artist in the colony for one of the governors, by whom they were presented to Mr. Lambert. I am strengthened in this opinion by observing among them many of the denizens of the penal settlement of Norfolk Island, a part never I believe visited by White.”

In 1800 they were borrowed by Dr. Latham, as appears from an autograph letter from him to Mr. Lambert, inserted



into the first volume. It was this circumstance which conferred on these drawings a far greater value than they would intrinsically have possessed. Dr. Latham not only wrote on each drawing with his own hand the name which he intended the species to retain, but drew up from these designs a great number of original specific descriptions, which he published for the first time in the second Supplement of his 'Synopsis,' 4to, London, 1802, and which are repeated in his 'General History of Birds,' and in the works of Shaw, Vieillot and other compilers. But inasmuch as many of the drawings are but rude and unscientific copies of nature, and the descriptions are often very vague copies of the drawings, these nominal species have hitherto lain in great obscurity, which will now be in great measure removed by the fortunate discovery, at Mr. Lambert's death, of the original designs.

The plates 121, 122, 126, 127, 129, 131, 134, 136 and 139 of Latham's second Supplement are copies, more or less exact, of some of these drawings; and it further appears that a M. Francillon, a French artist, copied others of them early in the present century, as some of the plates in Vieillot's 'Oiseaux Dorées,' said to be from M. Francillon's designs, are manifest copies from this collection. From that time till very recently the "New South Wales Drawings" remained in oblivion, to the no small inconvenience of the science, for had Messrs. Vigors and Horsfield and other writers on Australian ornithology had an opportunity of consulting them, it would have saved us many superfluous synonyms and cleared up many difficulties.

These remarks, it is hoped, will prove the great value of original drawings when they have been used as the basis of specific descriptions. How much useless lumber was removed from zoology by the valuable memoir of Lichtenstein on the original designs for Marcgrave's 'History of Brazil,' now preserved at Berlin! (See Oken's 'Isis,' 1820.) And Mr. Gray would confer an equal boon if he would give us a *catalogue raisonnée* of the *yet unpublished* drawings made by Forster during Capt. Cook's voyage, and preserved in the British Museum. There are also numerous unascertained species described by Latham from drawings once belonging to Lady Impey, Gen. Davies, and other persons, which, if they could be now discovered, would prove of the *utmost value* to modern science. Let me hope that these observations may aid in bringing some of these lost documents to light, and in submitting them to the criticisms of zoologists.

I now proceed to make some specific remarks by way of a commentary and supplement to Mr. Gray's paper, premising



that the determination of many of these species is rendered difficult by the rudeness of the designs, and by the changes which some of the colours have undergone, especially the *whites*, which being metallic colours have become oxydized, and are now changed to black. Another difficulty arises from some of the birds being drawn of the natural size and others reduced, without any indication when this is the case, so that the dimensions given by Latham from the drawings are often faulty. Hence, after all the pains bestowed by Mr. G. R. Gray, Mr. Gould, and myself, some few of the drawings still fail to be identified with any known species. These may either represent true species unknown to modern science, or they may possibly be, as Mr. Gould conjectures, mere inventions of the artist.

Page 189 of the present vol. After "*FALCO nisus*, Lath.," insert var.  $\delta$ . (This bird is the *Accipiter torquatus*, not *Astur approximans*, J. G.) Also note that the larger species, *Astur approximans* of Vigors and Gould, is unquestionably a true *Accipiter* and not an *Astur*. (The true *Falco radiatus* of Latham is also not an *Astur* but an *Accipiter*, J. G.).

(*FALCO lunulatus*, Lath., is perhaps a young *Ieracidea*, J. G.\*)

(*LANIUS robustus*, Lath., represents one of the numerous varieties of plumage of *Graucalus mentalis*. It must now I suppose be called *Graucalus robustus*, J. G.)

*LANIUS erectus*, Lath., judging from the figure, is more like a *Malurus* than a *Falcunculus*, but I am unacquainted with any species like it.

P. 190. *CORVUS versicolor*, Lath., is a true species of *Strepera*, of a gray colour, allied in form and size to *Strepera graculina*. I possess a specimen, and Mr. Gould has shot it in New South Wales. The name *versicolor* being decidedly erroneous, Mr. Gould proposes to call it *Strepera cinerea*.

*CORVUS cyanoleucus*, Lath. As this bird was also very accurately described by Latham in his second Supplement under the name of *Gracula picata*, and as the name *picata* is more correctly descriptive than *cyanoleuca*, I should prefer making the permanent designation of the bird *Grallina picata* (Lath.) rather than *Grallina cyanoleuca* (Lath.).

For *CUCULUS phasianus*, Lath., read *CUCULUS phasianinus*, Lath., and it should therefore now stand as *Centropus phasianinus*.

P. 191. (*CERTHIA melanops*, Lath. Syn. Sup. ii. p. 165. description 1, is perhaps the same as *Glycyphila fulvifrons*, J. G.)

(*CERTHIA melanops*, var. Lath. l. c. description 2, is certainly *Glycyphila fulvifrons*, J. G.)

\* Mr. Gould and I have compared the drawing of *Falco lunulatus*, Lath., with specimens of *Ieracidea berigora* and *Falco frontatus*, Gould. Though differing from both, it most resembles the *Ieracidea*. The name *Falco frontatus* may therefore be allowed to stand.



(*CERTHIA leucophæa*, Lath., is not *Glycyphila subocularis* as Mr. Gray makes it, but is the *Climacteris picumnus*, Tem., J. G.) This is sufficiently evident on comparing the drawing of *C. leucophæa* with Mr. Gould's figure of the female *Climacteris picumnus*. This bird should therefore be designated as *Climacteris leucophæa* (Lath.).

The *Certhia atricapilla* of Lath. is figured and described with a white chin, which distinguishes it from the *Meliphaga atricapilla* of Sir W. Jardine's 'Illustrations of Ornithology,' ser. 1. pl. 134. f. 1. Mr. Gray unites it to *Melithreptus lunulatus* (Shaw), but that differs in having a white band at the back of the head. The *Certhia atricapilla*, Lath., is therefore either a distinct species from both the above, or it may possibly be the young of Jardine's *M. atricapilla*.

*Certhia sanguinolenta* is probably the female of *Myzomela dibapha*.

To the synonyms of *CERTHIA dibapha*, Lath., add *Meliphaga cardinalis*, V. and H. (nec *Certhia cardinalis*, Lath.) and *Certhia australasiae*, Leach.

(*CERTHIA canescens*, Lath., is perhaps the *Colluriocinclla cinerea*, V. and H., J. G.)

*CERTHIA cærulescens*, Lath., is the *Zosterops dorsalis*, Vig., not the *Z. tenuirostris*, Gould. It is also the *Sylvia lateralis* of Latham, and the latter specific name seems preferable to *cærulescens*. Add *Certhia diluta*, Shaw, and *Philedon cæruleus*, Cuv., to the synonyms of *Zosterops lateralis*.

Add *Certhia xanthotis*, Shaw, to the synonyms of *Certhia chrysotis*, Lath.

P. 192. Mr. Gray makes the *Meliphaga auricomis* of Vigors, Swainson and Gould, to be distinct from *Muscicapa auricomis*, Lath., but I do not see on what grounds. This bird is figured no less than four times over in the "New S. Wales Drawings"—once as *Turdus melanops*, and again under Latham's MS. names of *Muscicapa australis*, *Sylvia mystacea*, and *Muscicapa novæ hollandiæ*. These three last references Latham seems to have afterwards incorporated into one species, described in his second Supplement under the name of *Muscicapa auricomis*. The species should therefore retain the appropriate name of *Ptilotis auricomis*.

*TURDUS harmonicus*, Lath., is, I have no doubt, a synonym of *Colluriocinclla cinerea*, Vig., which should therefore stand as *Colluriocinclla harmonica*.

*TURDUS prasinus*, Lath., seems to be the young of *Pachycephala rufiventris* (Lath.).

(*TURDUS tenebrosus*, Lath., is perhaps the young of *Artamus sordidus*, J. G.)

To the synonyms of *TURDUS lunulatus*, Lath., add *Turdus varius*, V. and H., and perhaps also *T. varius* of Horsfield's 'Java.'

(*TURDUS fuliginosus*, Lath., is *Merula nestor*, Gould, J. G.), and will now stand as *Merula fuliginosa*.

(*TURDUS maxillaris*, Lath., is perhaps the *Sphecotheres australis*, Sw., J. G.)

(*TURDUS mellinus*, Lath., is the young male of *Sericulus chrysocephalus*, J. G.)



*LOXIA bella*, Lath., and *Loxia nitida*, Lath., constitute a well-known species of *Estrilda*, which may stand as *Estrilda bella*, Lath.

(*LOXIA fascians*, Lath., is my *Micræa macroptera*, *Myiagra macroptera*, Vig. I presume it must now be termed *Micræa fascians*, J. G.)

P. 193. To the synonyms of *Muscicapa pectoralis*, Lath., add *Turdus lunularis*, Steph., and *Lanius albicollis*, Vieill.

I feel quite satisfied that *Muscicapa cucullata*, Lath., is the same as *Petroica bicolor*, Swains., which should therefore stand as *Petroica cucullata* (Lath.). *Grallina bicolor*, V. and H., is another synonym of it.

*MUSCICAPA rhodogastra*, Lath., is synonymous with *Saxicola rhodogastra*, Drap., and *Muscicapa lathamii*, Vig. It therefore stands as *Petroica rhodogastra* (Lath.).

*MOTACILLA atricapilla*, Lath., is possibly the young male of *Sericulus chrysocephalus*, as it bears some resemblance to the drawing of *Turdus mellinus*, Lath.

(Mr. Gould considers that the *SYLVIA sagittata*, Lath. (which is certainly the *Anthus minimus*, Vig.) will probably rank as the type of a new genus; but for the present we may follow Mr. Gray in calling it *Acanthiza sagittata*.)

(*SYLVIA leucophæa*, Lath., is *Micræa fascians* (Lath.), J. G.)

(*SYLVIA versicolor*, Lath., is *Chrysococcyx lucidus*, J. G.) This seems to be the *Chrysococcyx plagosus* of Mr. Gray, who I believe regards the true *C. lucidus* of New Zealand as a distinct species. The toes, having been erroneously drawn, induced Latham to make it a *Sylvia*.

P. 194. The following synonyms refer to *HIRUNDO caudacuta*, Lath.: *Chætura australis*, Steph.; *Hirundo fusca*, Steph., and *Chætura macroptera*, Sw.

(*HIRUNDO pacifica*, Lath., is *Cypselus australis*, Gould, J. G.) It should therefore be designated *Cypselus pacificus*.

To the synonyms of *CAPRIMULGUS vittatus*, Lath., add *Caprimulgus cristatus*, White, and *Ægotheles australis*, Sw.

*CAPRIMULGUS megacephalus*, Lath., appears to be the same as *Podargus stanleyanus*, V. and H., and perhaps also *Caprimulgus gracilis*, Lath.

*COLUMBA melanoleuca*, Lath., is the same as *Columba picata*, Lath., *Columba armillaris*, Tem., and *Columba jamiesoni*, Quoy. It will stand as *Phaps picata* (Lath.), Selby.

A comparison of the original drawing of *Charadrius magnirostris*, Lath., with a specimen in my collection has convinced me that this bird is no other than *Ædicnemus grallarius* (Lath.). We have here an instructive example of the mode in which errors arise and are propagated in natural history. The artist who drew the bird which Latham named *Charadrius magnirostris* has represented with considerable exactness the plumage of *Ædicnemus grallarius*, but by throwing too strong a shade into the nasal groove, he led Latham to describe the beak as "very broad, resembling the *Tody* genus." Next came Illiger, who in his 'Prodromus Systematis Mammalium



et Avium,' published in 1811, had the rashness to found a genus, *Burhinus*, on Latham's imperfect description of a rude drawing, and the consequence has been that for the last thirty years our systems of ornithology have been haunted by a "*Burhinus magnirostris*"—a *vox et præterea nihil*, unknown both to nature and to science. The original drawing which led to all this confusion has now assisted in dispelling it.

*CHARADRIUS griseus*, Lath., is I conceive the *Charadrius virginianus*, Borkh. (*C. marmoratus*, Wagl., *C. pectoralis*, Less., *C. affinis*, Boié).

The following remarks refer to some additional species of Latham not in Mr. Gray's list:—

*FALCO ponticerianus*, var. Lath., is the *Haliastur leucosternus* (Gould).

*CORVUS melanops*, Lath., is the *Graucalus melanops*.

*GALLINULA porphyrio*, var. B. Lath., is *Porphyrio melanonotus*, Tem.

*FALCO melanops*, Lath., is the *Accipiter torquatus*, Tem. (*Nisus australis*, Less.) As the black round the eye which suggested the specific name of *melanops* seems to be an invention of the artist, I would reject that name on the ground of its serious incorrectness, and retain the later one of *torquatus*.

*FALCO albicilla*, var. Lath., is the *Ichthyaëtus leucogaster* (Lath.), young (*Haliaëtus sphenurus*, Gould).

*FALCO clarus*, Lath., is perhaps the young of *Astur novæ hollandiæ* (Lath.).

*FALCO pacificus*, Lath., is perhaps a peculiar state of *Milvus isurus*, Gould, with the head pure white.

*MUSCICAPA erythrogastra*, var. 2. Lath. Syn. Sup. ii. p. 216, is perhaps a new species of *Petroica*, differing from *P. multicolor* by having a white eyebrow.

(*CUCULUS flabelliformis*, Lath., may perhaps be the *Cuculus cineraceus*, Vig., J. G.)

*ARDEA antigone*, var. Lath., is *Grus antigone* (Lin.) (*Grus orientalis*, Frankl.).

*LANIUS curvirostris*, Lath., is *Cracticus torquatus* (Lath.) (*Vanga destructor*, Tem.).

*ARDEA maculata*, Lath., is *Nycticorax caledonica*, young.

Besides the above there are several other species which Latham originally described from these drawings, but which, having been long since identified and made known to naturalists, it is unnecessary to enumerate.

XLVIII.—*Notes on the Botany of Sicily.* By JOHN BALL, B.A., M.R.I.A.

HAVING observed in a recent number of this Magazine a paper upon the Botany of Sicily, containing a list of species observed or recorded as belonging to that island, I have been induced to refer to some notes made during a very hasty





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