P R E F A C E.

THE acquisition of a small but valuable collection of Birds from the Himalayan Mountains by Mr. John Gould, F.L.S., Superintendent of the Ornithological Collection of the Zoological Society, afforded an opportunity, in the course of last year, of giving a sample of the Ornithology of that interesting range. The opportunity also occurring of employing the well-known abilities of Mrs. Gould in delineating these birds, it was considered expedient to make a selection of a hundred of the most important for publication, with the assurance of the execution of the Plates being equal to the interest of the subjects. The specimens were occasionally exhibited at the evening meetings of the Committee of Science and Correspondence of the Zoological Society, and descriptions given from time to time of the new species, which were subsequently published in the "Proceedings" of the Committee. In the course of the exhibition of the original collection, a few subjects were added from the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, from the Museums at Glasgow and Liverpool, and that of the Hon. C. J. Shore, figures of which were incorporated in the Work. The Century is now completed: and the following detailed descriptions of the species are intended to accompany the Plates.

The whole of the original specimens from which the Plates were taken, amounting to ninety, are deposited in the Museum of the Zoological Society, to which they were most liberally presented by Mr. Gould. A reference to the collections to which the remaining ten belong, will be added to the description of the respective species.

It is not to be expected that much general information respecting the geographical distribution of forms and species, which constitutes the chief value of local collections, can be derived from so limited a collection as the present. Still, many important inferences may be drawn from it, that throw much light on this important subject. The most prominent feature, in this respect, of the collection, is the number of Northern forms that are found to exist in these comparatively Southern latitudes; a fact of course to be accounted for by the consideration of the elevation of these mountains affording a temperature equal to that of the most northern regions.

PREFACE.

Among the forms which remind us of the North of Europe, species may be noticed of the *Jay* and *Nutcracker*¹, of the *Titmouse*, *Goldfinch*, *Bulfinch*, and *Blackbird*², of the *Cuckoo*, *Woodpecker*, and *Creeper*³, differing little in structure and disposition of their colours from our well-known British species. The greater part of the British *Ducks* have been observed to inhabit these mountains. And other species of the *Natatorial* birds, as well as many of the *Wading* order, exhibit, if not the same specific characters, at least the exact forms of those of the North of Europe.

The intermediate situation of these mountains, lying between the northern and southern parts of Asia, suggests to us the supposition of many southern Asiatic forms being united to those of the north. Accordingly we find some of the most prominent groups⁴ lately characterized as belonging to Hindostan and the Eastern Archipelago, represented in the Himalayan mountains by new species. Several of the groups⁵ also which are common to both Africa and India, have their representatives in this extensive district. And many of the Australian genera⁶ may be traced through the Archipelagan islands and the continent of India, until they reach their apparent northern limit in the mountains of Nepâl.

A few forms seem to be peculiar to this district, or at least to make it their central habitation. Among the most important of these are the splendid *Pheasants* which have been characterized by M. Temminck under the name of *Lophophorus*, of which the now well-known *Impeyan Pheasant* is the type; the *crested Pheasants*, which the same naturalist has separated under the title of *Euplocamus*; and the *horned Pheasants*, which M. Cuvier has equally distinguished by the name of *Tragopan*. In addition to these, a form apparently belonging to the *Shrikes*, and one to the ground *Thrushes*, as well as a very interesting form that unites the characters of some remote genera of the *Wading Birds*, will be found to be characterized⁷ for the first time, from the birds in the present collection.

¹ *Garrulus*, Cuv.; *Nucifraga*, Briss.

² *Parus*, Linn.; *Carduelis*, Briss.; *Pyrrhula*, Briss.; *Turdus*, Auct.

³ *Cuculus*, Linn.; *Picus*, Linn.; *Certhia*, Auct.

⁴ Such as *Myophonus*, Temm.; *Enicurus*, Temm.; *Bucco*, Auct.

⁵ *Hematornis*, Vig.; *Muscipeta*, Cuv.; *Lamprotornis*, Temm.; *Pastor*, Id.; *Buceros*, Linn.

⁶ *Rhipidura*, Vig. and Horsf.; *Cinclosoma*, Id.; *Pitta*, Temm.; *Pomatorhinus*, Horsf.

⁷ These genera are named *Hypsipetes*, *Zoothera*, and *Ibidorhyncha*. A second species of the first group, discovered in the Dukhun, has been described by Col. Sykes since the publication of the characters of the genus.

Gould, John. 1831. "Preface [A century of birds from the Himalaya Mountains]." *A century of birds from the Himalaya Mountains* –.
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