

XLVI.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notices.*

WE have received the following letters addressed to "The Editors of 'The Ibis'":—

SIRS,—After reading your notice of the first number of Mr. Hartert's 'Palæarctic Avifauna' (above, pp. 291-293), I feel anxious to state my full accordance with your views, especially as regards "subspecies" and "trinomials." Moreover, I am sure that your views will obtain support not only among all the workers of the "old school," but also from all Ornithologists who foresee serious evil in the constantly growing multiplication of named forms. In this sense the well-known Dutch Ornithologist, Baron R. Snouckaert van Schauburg, who has an excellent knowledge of Palæarctic birds, writes to me in regard to Hartert's new work:—"One feels almost dizzy in contemplating the excessive increase of 'subspecies,' of which many are by no means sharply defined and perhaps such as had better not have been characterised at all. For even a 'subspecies' ought to be recognisable without having to look at the locality noted on the label." With this load of always increasing subspecies, even our Palæarctic birds are now likely to be overwhelmed, how much more the exotic forms, if the splitting into "subspecies" goes on at the rate now practised by the modern school. Mr. Oberholser, for example, divides *Bubo virginianus* into 17, and *Thryothorus musculus* into 15 subspecies—the number to follow seems to be incalculable. And besides the burden of the three names, we find among them such delightful compounds as "*Thouarsitreron dupetit-thouarsi dupetit-thouarsi*" and "*Pternistes leucoscepus muhamed-ben-abdullah*" of Erlanger! This is, indeed, no encouragement to students of ornithology, and still less so when they find out that the masters of the "new school" are by no means in full accordance as regards the value of their subspecies. Thus, for example, of the five "subspecies" of *Astragalinus*, lately characterised by Ridgway, three have already been rejected by Oberholser, and according to Hartert *Certhia familiaris*



*harterti* of Hellmayr is really a form of *Certhia brachydactyla*! Thus we see that the old dispute as to the value of species continues strong even among the believers in subspecies! The members of the "old school" may therefore continue on the way that they think to be correct, notwithstanding the kind wishes of Herr Hellmayr (*cf.* Journ. f. Ornith. 1903, p. 404), who in rather coarse terms advises us to get rid of all the non-believers in the new code (for the benefit of science) as soon as possible!

Yours &c.,

Dr. O. FINSCH.

Braunschweig,  
June 1904.

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SIRS,—May I venture to point out that in your review of Dr. Fulton's interesting paper "On the Habits of the Long-tailed Cuckoo in New Zealand" you are inaccurate in your statement (*supra*, p. 468) that Dr. Fulton gives "a list of sixteen species which are known, with more or less certainty, to be the foster-parents of *Urodynamis*"? It is true that the author mentions sixteen cases, more or less specific, that have come to his knowledge, but the hosts were only ten native species and a Brown Linnet. The evidence adduced in some of these cases is anything but satisfactory; and one knows how even persons who are tolerably good observers are liable to make mistakes in identifying birds on the wing. I have no doubt whatever that *Miro albifrons*, *Myiomoira macrocephala*, and *Clitonyx ochrocephala* have been sometimes pressed into the service; but I am very sceptical about several of the other species mentioned. I think it is highly unlikely, for example, that our Wood-Pigeon (which is strictly frugivorous) should ever have been the foster-parent of the Cuckoo, for it would know nothing of the necessity of feeding the young bird on caterpillars, on which it almost wholly subsists; and I think it just as unlikely that the Tui has ever filled the office, seeing what a determined and chronic hostility exists between that bird and the Cuckoo. Then, again, even a practised observer might be mistaken in thinking that he



saw a Grey Creeper, instead of a Grey Warbler (very similar in appearance and manner of flight), "feeding a young Cuckoo." In the case of the Bell-bird, all that is alleged is that a Cuckoo was "seen sitting on a nest"; and in that of *Zosterops*, an egg of a dark colour "tapering to one end" was found in the nest and a Cuckoo was "seen coming out of the tree." To my mind much more conclusive evidence must be forthcoming before such isolated cases as these can be regarded as established. As regards the Grey Warbler, however, there are innumerable well-authenticated cases of that species being a foster-mother of *Urodynamis* all over the country.

Yours &c.,

3/4 Great Winchester Street,  
London, E.C.,  
July 21, 1904.

WALTER L. BULLER.

SIRS,—Mr. Hugh S. Gladstone's "Note on the Decrease in the Weight of Eggs as Incubation advances" ('Ibis,' 1904, p. 376) shews the average decrease in Pheasants' eggs to be a little over 14 per cent. In 1902 I made some experiments as to weight of eggs of the Song-Thrush and Blackbird, and came to the conclusion that during the period of incubation the decrease amounted to about 15 per cent. (see 'Irish Naturalist,' vol. xi. p. 237). It is gratifying to find that these results approach each other so closely.

Yours &c.,

Hillsborough, Co. Down,  
22nd July, 1904.

NEVIN H. FOSTER.

SIRS,—In the July number of the 'Ibis' (above, p. 440) Mr. Hartert states that "Mr. Oates was the first to describe properly the Pipit now known under the name of [*Anthus*] *maculatus*."

I cannot agree to this. Oates's 'Birds of Burmah,' vol. i., in which the description cited by Mr. Hartert appeared, was published in 1883. Now the distinction between the two forms *Anthus trivialis* and *Anthus macu-*



*latus* was sufficiently indicated by Blyth in 1847 (Journ. As. Soc. Beng. vol. xvi. p. 433 and footnote), and in his 'Catalogue of the Birds in the Museum of the Asiatic Society,' published in 1849, Blyth distinguished the two Pipits under the names of *Dendronanthus trivialis* and *D. maculatus*. The distinction was preserved by Horsfield and Moore (Cat. Birds Mus. E. I. Co. vol. i. p. 354, 1854), who, however, used different specific names—*Anthus arboreus* and *A. agilis*. In Blyth's and Horsfield's Catalogues characters were not added, but both forms were clearly described in Jerdon's 'Birds of India,' vol. ii. p. 238 (1863), under the names of *Pipastes agilis* and *P. arboreus*, whilst in the appendix to vol. iii. p. 873 (1864) this note appeared: "According to Blyth, Sykes's *Anthus agilis* is true *A. arboreus*, and the common Indian race will therefore bear Hodgson's name *MACULATUS*," the last term being printed in small capitals to shew that this name was adopted. I think it is clear that even if Blyth's note of 1847 is not accepted as sufficient (I should have no hesitation in accepting it), the first to describe properly the Pipit now known as *Anthus maculatus* was not Mr. Oates in 1883, but Dr. Jerdon in 1863.

Apart altogether from the subject of trinomials, I think the question whether *A. trivialis* and *A. maculatus* should be regarded as "species" or "subspecies" is of some interest. *A. maculatus* is unknown west of India proper (the Hindostan of some map-makers), *A. trivialis* has only been recorded in one instance east of the Bay of Bengal, and this instance is now discredited by Mr. Oates, the original collector. In India proper both kinds occur and occasionally intermediate forms are met with. Both birds breed in the Western Himalayas. Under these circumstances I would suggest that the intermediate birds, as in some other similar cases, are simply hybrids between nearly allied forms, which are entitled to specific rather than sub-specific rank.

Yours &c.,

August 1904.

W. T. BLANFORD.



SIRS,—A few remarks as to the Scottish Ospreys may be of interest to the Members of the B. O. U. :—

There were none seen at Loch an Eilean in 1903, and none in 1904. Only one came to the only other nesting-site in 1904. An Osprey (called a "Buzzard") was captured—and killed!—in the Lakeland District of England in the spring migration of 1904\*. It seems, therefore, that the Osprey as a British breeding species is approaching extinction, while it does not appear that the Zoological Society's medals have been productive of any permanent good.

Are the resources of the civilization of this generation exhausted?

Yours &c.,

Dunipace House, Larbert,  
Sept. 1st, 1904.

J. A. HARVIE-BROWN.

SIRS,—I find some difficulty in following the reasoning of the defenders of the trinomial system in nomenclature, as given by the Hon. Walter Rothschild at the recent meeting of the B. O. C. (see Bull. B. O. C. xiv. p. 87). My views about the use of a trinomial are:—By all means let geographical variation be studied, but why designate the birds with a trinomial that does not describe the geographical value? such as "*ernesti*," "*delicatula*," "*kirchhoffi*," "*insularis*," &c. So long as the trinomial has a distinctive geographical descriptive power there can be little "mischievous interpretation" of it either in the Museum or in the Field.

As to the difference of habits in closely allied races, I cannot place so much importance upon the illustration of it in the instance of *Erithacus rubecula (typicus)* and *E. rubecula melophilus* as is attributed to it by Mr. Rothschild. If such a course be adopted, then we may as well distinguish between our Common House-Sparrow of the country and the Common House-Sparrow of the town, or between the human inhabitant of the country and the dweller in the slums of a great city.

\* Vide 'The Cairngorm Club Journal,' vol. iv. no. 23, p. 308.



In the eleven different forms of *Aluco* instanced, would it not be equally (and perhaps more) to the purpose to write them down 1 to 11, or *a*, *b*, *c*, &c., and say

- a. Aluco flammea*, type.
- b.*    "        "        "        from Wales.
- "        "        "        Tring.
- "        "        "        Long Marston, &c.
- c.*    "        "        "        Ilbanno, Bari, Seni, Cagliari, or  
                                  simply "Sardinia."
- d.*    "        "        "        Queensland and S. Australia.

and so on? Thus there would be no necessity to ask with regard to any of them whence came the specimens.

It seems to me that if, as our writer says (*op. cit.* p. 90), "NOMENCLATURE was invented to make the reference to species or families as easy as possible," then my proposal to use only a geographically descriptive terminal name ought to be adhered to: it would not confuse Field-Naturalists with names which do not describe such values.

*Aluco flammea nigrescens*, I humbly think, would be better adapted for use in the field if written *Aluco flammea*, St. Vincent, simply, with as much descriptive matter afterwards as might fill a page, *if necessary*!!

Yours &c.,

Dunipace House, Larbert,  
Sept. 1st, 1904.

J. A. HARVIE-BROWN.

*The Specific Names of the Song-Thrush and Redwing.*—A much-esteemed correspondent sends us the following remarks on this subject:—

It may assist members of the B. O. U. and readers of 'The Ibis' to have before them a brief statement of the facts relating to the use of the names *Turdus musicus* and *Turdus iliacus* by Linnæus. Mr. Hartert, in the last number of this Journal (above, p. 431), has pointed out that, according to the brief "diagnoses" in the tenth edition of Linnæus's 'Systema Naturæ,' the name *Turdus musicus*



applies to the Redwing and *Turdus iliacus* to the Song-Thrush, thus transposing the scientific names that had been in use for these two birds not only since the time of Linnæus, but long previously.

The facts, so far as they are of importance, appear to be the following :—

The ‘Fauna Suecica,’ 1st edition (1746), No. 189, p. 72, on which the *Turdus musicus* of the tenth edition of the Syst. Nat. was founded, includes both birds: the brief description belongs to the Redwing, the references, which are of at least as great importance, relate chiefly to the Song-Thrush, as do the vernacular names *Klera* and *Kledra*. The two birds were evidently confounded by Linnæus, as was noticed in 1817 by Nilsson (Orn. Suec. i. p. 177, note) and in Newton’s ‘Dictionary of Birds,’ p. 778. In no other edition of the ‘Fauna Suecica’ does there appear to be any reference to the Song-Thrush or Redwing.

In the tenth edition of the ‘Systema Naturæ’ (1758) the names *Turdus musicus* and *T. iliacus* were first used by Linnæus, binomials not having been employed in the first editions of the ‘Fauna Suecica.’ The brief descriptive notice under *T. musicus* applies, as has been pointed out by Mr. Hartert (*l. c.*), to the Redwing, while that under *T. iliacus* agrees better with the Song-Thrush. But all the synonymy under *T. musicus* belongs to the Song-Thrush and all that under *T. iliacus* to the Redwing.

In the edition of the ‘Fauna Suecica’ of 1761 (p. 79) the “diagnoses” of *T. musicus* and *T. iliacus* printed in the tenth edition of the ‘Systema’ are transposed, the principal references remaining as before, and this arrangement is preserved in the twelfth edition of the ‘Systema Naturæ’ (1766).

The only possible conclusion is that the “diagnoses” of *T. musicus* and *T. iliacus* in the tenth edition of the ‘Systema’ were interchanged owing to some mistake (possibly occasioned by the printer), and that Linnæus corrected the mistake in his next subsequent publications. As the diagnoses were thus recognised as erroneous by



Linnaeus himself, the determination of the species for which he used the names *T. musicus* and *T. iliacus* depends upon his references to other authors, and these all serve to identify *T. musicus* with the Song-Thrush. The reference under *T. musicus* to No. 189 in the 'Fauna Suecica' of 1746 is inconclusive, because under that number the Song-Thrush and the Redwing were both comprised.

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*Report on the British Museum for 1903-4.*—The report on the progress of the British Museum for the year 1903-4 contains the following passages relating to the Collection of Birds:—

The arrangement and exhibition of the Birds in the Gallery has been retarded for want of funds. The remounting of the Hornbills, Swifts, and Cuckoos has almost completed the arrangement of the Picarian Birds. Many specimens of the British series have been replaced by better-mounted examples.

An illustrated Guide to the Gallery has been completed and is now in the Press, and will shortly be issued to the public.

Screens have been erected which partially shut off the bays from the centre of the Gallery, thus gaining wall-space for exhibition purposes. Progress has been made with the osteological collection, and a number of eggs have also been registered and incorporated.

The skeletons of the Ratitæ, Sphenisci, Tubinares, Anseres, and Coraciiformes have been labelled, catalogued, and placed in cabinets. A series of preparations illustrating the anatomy of the Ratitæ has been made and exhibited in the Gallery.

Considerable additions have been made to the collection of birds in spirit.

The fourth volume of the 'Catalogue of Eggs' and the fifth volume of the 'Hand-list of Birds' are now in the press and will shortly be issued.

The accessions to the Collection of Birds reached a total of 9576, of which the following deserve special notice:—75 birds,



16 eggs, and 3 nests from the Soudan, presented by Surgeon-Major H. N. Dunn; 22 birds, including examples of 15 species new to the collection, from Fernando Po, collected and presented by Boyd Alexander, Esq.; 302 birds from the Cameroons, W. Africa, including the types of 2 new species, collected by Mr. G. L. Bates, purchased; 130 eggs from North Cachar, collected by Mr. E. C. Stuart-Baker, purchased; 284 birds, including the types of 6 new species, from Nyasa-land, presented by Sir Alfred Sharpe, K.C.B.; 378 birds from the Southern Shan States containing 3 types of species recently described as new to science, collected by Messrs. H. M. Thompson and W. H. Craddock, purchased; 40 eggs, 5 nests, and 61 birds from Southern Persia, including the type of a new species of *Sitta*, presented by H. F. Witherby, Esq.; 96 birds from New Zealand and the adjacent islands, presented by the Earl of Ranfurly; 989 birds from the province of Fohkien, China, presented by C. B. Rickett, Esq.; 451 birds from Namaqua-land, collected by Mr. H. C. B. Grant, presented by C. D. Rudd, Esq.; 351 eggs from North Queensland, presented by W. Radcliffe Saunders, Esq.; 257 birds and 3 nests from British East Africa, presented by A. B. Percival, Esq.; 131 birds from Cyprus, purchased; 31 birds from the Soudan, presented by R. M. Hawker, Esq.; 582 birds from Yunnan, including the types of 7 new species, presented by Colonel G. Rippon; 72 birds from Sierra Leone, presented by Robin Kemp, Esq.; 46 eggs and 2 nests from the Azores, collected by W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, Esq., presented by the Hon. W. Rothschild, D.Sc., M.P.; 853 birds, 19 skeletons, 91 eggs, and 12 nests from Deelfontein, Cape Colony, collected by Messrs. E. H. Seimund and C. H. B. Grant, presented by Colonel A. P. Sloggett, C.M.G.; 244 birds from Arabia, collected by Mr. G. W. Bury, purchased; 466 birds from Abyssinia, including the type of a new species, collected by Mr. E. Degen; 80 birds from Southern New Guinea, presented by Capt. F. R. Barton; 420 birds from Patagonia, collected by J. Koslowsky, purchased; 114 birds from Burmah, presented by Capt. Mearns; 443 birds and 192



skeletons from Matto Grosso, presented by Mrs. Percy Sladen; 114 birds from Buenos Aires, presented by Ernest Gibson, Esq.; 275 birds from Eastern Brazil, collected by M. Robert, purchased; 249 birds from Paraguay, collected by Mr. W. Foster, purchased; 2 birds from Australia, both new to the collection, presented by Dr. P. L. Selater, F.R.S.; 25 birds from the Persian Gulf, presented by W. D. Cumming, Esq.; and 223 birds from various islands in the South Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (Voyage of R.Y.S. 'Valhalla'), presented by the Earl of Crawford, K.T., F.R.S.

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*A new Station for the Study of Bird-Life.*—We are informed that articles of Incorporation have been drawn up for the establishment on a permanent foundation of the "Worthington Society for the Investigation of Bird-Life." The founder, Mr. Charles C. Worthington, will erect and endow, on his estate at Shawnee, Monroe County, Pennsylvania, the necessary buildings and equipment.

The Worthington Society will have for its purpose the consideration of bird-life as it is found in nature, and will also have many birds in confinement for study and experiment.

A temporary laboratory and aviary are being equipped, and preliminary work will begin with the instalment of a large number of native and foreign birds early in September. Mr. Worthington has procured the services of Mr. William E. D. Scott, Curator of the Department of Ornithology at Princeton University, as Director of the proposed Institution. Mr. Bruce Horsfall has been engaged as chief assistant and artist. The corps of assistants and workers will be increased as the plans of the Worthington Society become developed.

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*The Killdeer Plover in Great Britain.*—In 'Knowledge and Scientific News' for August last (vol. i. p. 187) Mr. W. P. Pycraft writes that he has found in the University Museum of Aberdeen an example of the Killdeer Plover (*Aegialitis vocifera*) which had been erroneously labelled as



the Ringed Plover (*Æ. hiaticola*). It was shot at Peterhead in 1867 by Mr. Andrew Murray. The first occurrence of this American species in Great Britain (near Christchurch in Hampshire) was recorded in this Journal in 1862 (p. 275). Another specimen was obtained in 1885 at Tresco, Scilly Islands (see Zool. 1885, p. 113); the example from Peterhead is therefore the third known to have been obtained in this country.

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*News from the Canaries.*—Herr Rudolf v. Tanner, who is resident at Vitaflor in Tenerife, writes that he has lately made an excursion to Fuerteventura and obtained a good series of *Pratincola dacotiae* (see Meade-Waldo, 'Ibis,' 1889, p. 505, pl. xi.), which he has sent to the Tring Museum. In the series, he says, this bird's throat varies from white to darkish black. On the coast of Tenerife, Herr v. Tanner has recently procured specimens of the Courser (*Cursorius gallicus*), which, however, had already been recorded by Mr. Meade-Waldo ('Ibis,' 1893, p. 205) as occasionally met with in Gran Canaria and as abundant in Fuerteventura, and has ascertained that *Erythrospiza githaginea* breeds in Tenerife. An interesting account of his observations in the pine-woods of Tenerife has been lately published in the 'Ornithologisches Jahrbuch' (xiv. p. 211, 1903).

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*The Birds of the Scotch Antarctic Expedition.*—We have much pleasure in being able to state that the collection of birds (consisting of from 500 to 600 skins and about 1000 eggs, besides specimens in spirit and numerous skeletons) made by the Scotch Antarctic Expedition, of the value of which we spoke in our last issue (above, p. 482), has arrived in Edinburgh, and will be worked out by Mr. W. Eagle Clarke. Mr. Alastair Ross, who accompanied the expedition, will be associated with Mr. Clarke, and will supply full notes on the nesting and other habits of the species, which will contain particulars of great interest.

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*Mr. Eagle Clarke's new Observing-Station.*—We are informed that, by permission of the Commissioners of Northern Lights, our fellow-member, Mr. Eagle Clarke, has been spending his holiday in the lighthouse on the Flannan Islands (West of The Lewis) for the purpose of the further study of migration. Since the lighthouse was erected on this outlying group a few years ago it has been ascertained that the islands lie in the course of a considerable stream of migratory birds *en route* between their northern spring- and southern winter-quarters, a fact which is of special interest owing to the far westerly situation of the isles, and one which renders it very desirable that the phenomena observed there should be thoroughly examined by an expert. Mr. Clarke has also investigated the limited terrestrial fauna and flora of the islands, which, owing to their remote situation and the difficulty of landing on them, have not hitherto received sufficient attention. The results of the expedition will, we trust, furnish materials for an article in 'The Ibis' next year.

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*The Birds of the National Antarctic Expedition.*—The 'Discovery,' after its three years' absence in the Antarctic Seas, reached the East India Docks on September 17th, and the collections of Natural History have been transferred to the Museum at South Kensington, where they will be examined and described by the members of the Scientific Staff of the Expedition, with the assistance of the Naturalists of the British Museum. The collection of Birds contains about 120 skins and a good series of eggs, besides skeletons and specimens in spirit. Dr. E. A. Wilson, under whose charge the collection has been formed, will, no doubt, undertake its description. One of the most remarkable discoveries made concerns the Emperor Penguin (*Aptenodytes forsteri*). This peculiar bird selects the dark night of the Antarctic midwinter as its breeding-season, and lays its single egg as it sits on an ice-floe, keeping it warm between its feet and the lower part of its abdomen.

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*The Superb Warbler of South-eastern Australia.*—In the ‘Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales’ for 1901 (vol. xxvi. p. 632) I pointed out that the bird named *Motacilla cyanea* by Ellis was met with in January 1777 at Adventure Bay, Bruni Island, near the south-eastern coast of Tasmania, and that consequently the name of *Malurus cyaneus* Ellis would have to stand for the Tasmanian species and that of *Malurus superbus* Shaw for the well-known species inhabiting South-eastern Australia.

In the ‘Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum’ (vol. iv. p. 286, 1879), Dr. Sharpe gives priority to Dr. Shaw’s description and figure of *Motacilla superba* in White’s ‘Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales’ over a similar description of Shaw’s in his ‘Naturalist’s Miscellany,’ an undated publication. In the latter work Dr. Shaw remarks as follows on the page succeeding his description of *Motacilla superba* and opposite the plate:—“The beautiful species of *Motacilla* here figured is a native of that part of New Holland called Van Dieman’s Land, and is one of the new species of birds which have been discovered during the voyages to those parts.”

Recently my attention has been drawn to an article in the ‘Annals and Magazine of Natural History,’ 6th series, vol. xv. p. 376 (1895), by Mr. C. D. Sherborn, giving the exact dates of publication of Shaw and Nodder’s ‘Naturalist’s Miscellany,’ of which plates 1 to 15 were published in 1789. *Motacilla superba* was described and figured on plate 10. The name having been based on the Tasmanian species in 1789 is untenable for the birds described by the same author in White’s ‘Voyage to New South Wales’ in 1790. Dr. Sharpe, in the ‘Proceedings of the Zoological Society’ (1881, p. 788), has separated the Queensland birds under the name of *Malurus cyanochlamys*. As, therefore, *Malurus superbus* is a mere synonym of the Tasmanian species, *Malurus cyaneus* Ellis, I wish to propose the name *Malurus australis* for the Superb Warbler or “Blue Wren” so common in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.—ALFRED J. NORTH, Aug. 4th, 1904.

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*Captain Alexander's Expedition.*—The scientific exploring expedition under Capt. Boyd Alexander, which left England for Upper Nigeria in February last, arrived at Ibi, 250 miles up the Benué, in April and landed there with the view of pushing north into the interior.

A case of specimens collected by the expedition and forwarded from Ibi has lately reached the Natural History Museum, but there are no bird-skins in it.

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*Birds of the Anglo-German Frontier of Uganda.*—We have already announced (see above, p. 312) the death by drowning, on the River Kagera, of Mr. W. G. Doggett, Naturalist to the Anglo-German Boundary Commission under Lt.-Col. Delmé-Radcliffe. The collections made by Doggett have now been received at the British Museum; they contain a series of about 450 bird-skins, all admirably prepared and in excellent condition, which, when worked out, will give much information on the Avifauna of a very little-known district of East Africa.

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*Mr. W. L. Sclater.*—The Director of the South African Museum, having finished the MS. of the fourth and concluding volume of the "Birds" for the 'Fauna of South Africa,' has left Cape Town on a short visit to the Victoria Falls on the Zambesi, by the newly-opened railway from Buluwayo. He has taken a collector with him, who will be stationed at some convenient spot in Rhodesia, where our knowledge of the native birds is still, in Mr. Sclater's opinion, quite imperfect. Capt. Alexander's excellent memoir ('Ibis,' 1899-1900) has given us a good idea of the Avifauna of the lower part of Zambesia, but in the higher districts of this enormous tract very little has as yet been done, and many new discoveries will, no doubt, be made.

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*The Sarawak Museum.*—The report of the Sarawak Museum for 1903, drawn up by Mr. R. Shelford, M.A., M.B.O.U., gives a good account of the condition of that flourishing establishment. The zoological collections have received many accessions during the past year, amongst which are enumerated examples of nine additional species of birds. The type and only certainly identified specimen of *Spilornis raja* has been transferred to the National Collection at South Kensington. It has been discovered that an example of a Stork received from the Baram district in 1892 and hitherto referred to *Dissura episcopus* really belongs to the nearly allied species recently described and figured in this Journal as *Dissura mortoni* ('Ibis,' 1903, p. 145, pl. v.), but more correctly named *Dissura stormi* (see above, p. 642).

We are informed that Mr. Shelford is about to resign the Curatorship of the Sarawak Museum and will return to England in June next. We believe that we may state that the vacant post, which is in the gift of H.E. The Rajah of Sarawak, is likely to be offered to another active and well-known member of our Union.

We may take this opportunity of mentioning that the Rajah of Sarawak, who has an English residence at Cirencester, has lately built in that town a new Museum for the exhibition of the products of Borneo of all kinds, which will shortly be open to the public. A series of the native birds of Borneo will form a portion of its contents.





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