

to get dark-coloured ; the feet soon afterwards get dark, and lastly the ears turn black.

In their movements they appear quicker than other rabbits, and they jump a considerable distance ; some in my possession I have seen leap upon objects 3 feet from the ground. The first specimens of these animals that came under my notice were obtained by Mr. Baker, who informed me that they came from the Himalayas. I have since seen a large number of them, and in no instance have I observed any variation in the colour or markings. They are prolific breeders, and appear extremely hardy.

Having some recollection of hearing a furrier once speak of the skins of the Polish Rabbit, I took an opportunity a few days since to examine a large lot of these skins at a fur warehouse, when I found that they were beyond all doubt from the animal now under notice. Upon inquiry I was told that these skins are imported into this country in large numbers, and extensively used as a substitute for ermine, which fur they much resemble. I find in Mulsant, 'Cours Élémentaire d'Histoire Naturelle,' the following :—"The fur of the White Rabbit, even that of the Polish Rabbit, is easily distinguished from that of the ermine, by its less cylindrical hairs, which are considerably longer than the down." I am also informed that they are bought at the great sale of furs that takes place annually at Leipsic ; to this great fair skins are brought from all parts of the world, and I think it highly probable that these skins are imported from the mountainous parts of Asia.

I have not at present examined the skull of this animal, but should I find sufficient difference upon comparing it with the skulls of the other known species, I shall then propose for it the name of *Lepus nigripes*, or Black-footed Rabbit.

July 14, 1857.

Dr. Gray, F.R.S., V.P., in the Chair.

Mr. Gould having returned from a visit to the United States, whither he had proceeded for the purpose of studying the habits and manners of the species of *Trochilus* frequenting that portion of the American continent, detailed some of the results of his observations.

Having arrived just prior to the period of the bird's migration from Mexico to the north, and having had ample opportunities for observing it in a state of nature, he noticed that its actions were very peculiar, and quite different from those of all other birds : the flight is performed with a motion of the wings so rapid as to be almost imperceptible ; indeed the muscular power of this little creature ap-

pears to be very great in every respect, as, independently of its rapid and sustained flight, it grasps the small twigs, flowers, &c. upon which it alights with great firmness, and if wounded clings to them with the utmost tenacity: it appears to be most active in the morning and evening, and to pass the middle of the day under the shade of the thick leafy branches. Occasionally it occurs in such numbers, that fifty or sixty may be seen on a single tree. When captured, it so speedily becomes tame, that it will feed from the hand or mouth within half an hour. Successful in keeping one alive during a long railway journey, in a gauze bag attached to his breast-button, for three days, during which it readily fed from a small bottle filled with a syrup of brown sugar and water, Mr. Gould determined to attempt the bringing of some living examples to England, in which he succeeded, but unhappily they did not long survive their arrival in London, and died on the second day: had they lived, it was his intention to have sent them to the Society's Gardens, where they would doubtless have been objects of great attraction. Mr. Gould added, that he was certain that they might be readily brought to this country; that they would live in the gardens at least during the months of summer, and that the captains of any of the great steamers now voyaging between England and America would willingly render the assistance requisite to effect this desirable object.

Mr. Gould exhibited a highly interesting species of *Ceriornis*, which he had found in the Collection of Dr. Cabot of Boston, who, with the greatest liberality, permitted him to bring it to England for the purpose of comparison and description. The appearance of this bird is very singular, and the uniform buff colouring of the breast would lead to the supposition that it is merely a variety of one or other of the previously known species of the genus; but the greater length of the tarsi, and the well-defined markings of the back, forbid such a conclusion. For this new bird, forming the fourth species of the genus, Mr. Gould proposed the name of

CERIORNIS CABOTI.

Forehead, sides of the head, nape and chin, black; crest and sides of the neck deep red; all the upper surface mottled with black, rich chestnut, buffy white, and black, the latter colouring assuming the form of a large circular spot at the tip of each feather; this buff mark greatly increasing in size on the scapularies, and the greater wing- and tail-coverts; primaries and tail feathers very dark brown, crossed with toothed markings of buff mottled with black; breast and under surface deep sandy buff stained with red, and black on the flanks, under tail-coverts and thighs.

Total length, $18\frac{1}{2}$; bill, $1\frac{3}{8}$; wing, 10; tail, $7\frac{1}{4}$; tarsi, $3\frac{1}{2}$; middle toe and nail, $2\frac{3}{4}$.

Hab. China.

Remark.—This species is more nearly allied to *C. Temmincki* than No. CCCXXXVII.—PROCEEDINGS OF THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

to the other members of the genus. The specimen is believed to be unique.

The following papers were read:—

1. ON STOASTOMIDÆ AS A FAMILY, AND ON SEVEN PROPOSED NEW GENERA, SIXTY-ONE NEW SPECIES, AND TWO NEW VARIETIES FROM JAMAICA. BY THE HON. EDWARD CHITTY.

Stoastomidæ! When I first open my cabinet of this Family to the spectator, two observations are generally made. The one, "How minute! how could you trouble yourself with such specks! they are not worth seeing, for we cannot see them." Then follows, "Well, they *are* very wonderful; but how did you collect them?"

To the first observation I answer, "True, they are but specks, and have very much injured my eyesight; but they *are* worth seeing under the microscope; for they are worthy to rank, and must rank, in point of sculpture, with the most wonderful and beautiful shells known to conchologists, and most of them are most worthy of a sculptor's or designer's study." Among the *Helices*, *Pupæ*, *Achatinæ*, *Cylindrellæ*, *Bulimi*, &c. there are plenty of *minute* species almost microscopic, and interesting enough; but, under the microscope, these only improve in size, and no further beauties are unfolded, and little further interest is given to them by its use. The *Stoastomidæ*, however, are not only wonderful for their minuteness, and from the knowledge that, however minute, they are part of an animal, perfect in its anatomy as that of the largest shell; but the form and sculpture of each species are so marked, that the microscope brings out in each, new beauties and new wonders, entitling them to rank among the most wonderful works in animal creation. And to say the *least* of these *Stoastomidæ*, "They *are* shells, and beautiful ones too, and are not only worthy, but *must*,—being known to exist,—be in every cabinet that pretends to the smallest degree of perfection or completion."

To the second I shall reply by practical information which I think will be valued.

"Easily attained, little valued," may be taken as a good general maxim. But my love for this family arose from a difficulty; and as it involves the history of *Stoastoma*, I may be permitted to relate it.

In the winter of 1848-49 the late Prof. C. B. Adams paid me a visit in Jamaica; and looking over a limited collection, he observed that which is now known as *Stoastoma pisum*. The singularity of its semicircular mouth was noticed by him, as it had been by me; but it then stood alone, and he put it on one side to be described as *Helicina pisum*, hesitating to give it generic importance. He next visited Manchester parish, the principal habitat of *St. pisum*; and meanwhile I, in my own garden in St. Thomas in the East parish, close to Yallahs Hill, found a minute shell with a somewhat similar mouth, about which I corresponded with him. This



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