

XXXIX.—*A few Critical Remarks on M. Carl J. Sundevall's Paper on the Birds of Calcutta, as republished by H. E. Strickland, Esq.* By ED. BLYTH, Curator to the Museum of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, &c.

COMMENCING with the remarks on the Bengal Soonderbuns (vide Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. xviii. 103), it may be as well to observe, that the animal inhabitants of this notoriously baleful region are far from being so little known as is commonly supposed, nor are the lower alluvia of the numerous anastomosing outlets of the Ganges so utterly unhealthy during great part of the year: viz. nearly throughout the dry season, divided into cold and hot; or from the end of November to that of June, when the rains have fairly set in. When the latter break up, the malaria becomes deadly to casual visitors, whether European or native; and even the Bengalee inhabitants are obliged to leave certain districts for a while; though a Mugh population, from Arracan, which, until recently, came to supply their place, seemed proof against the deleterious miasmata. Considerable tracts are under cultivation; and the belts of impenetrable dense jungle facing the network of broad river channels in many instances conceal from view a wide extent of productive rice cultivation within. Of the zoology, I doubt much whether more discoveries remain to be made there, at least among the terrene Vertebrata, than in other parts of Bengal; and even the Fishes have been so far investigated, that novelties among them are by no means to be reckoned upon in the course of an excursion.

Next, I am constrained to disagree with M. Sundevall in his estimation of the feathered musicians of Lower Bengal, which I cannot think are comparable to those of his native land, the latter being much the same as in Britain. Our finest song-bird in this part of the world, beyond all comparison, is the 'Shámah' (*Kit-tacincla macroura*, Lath.), which is never heard in the wild state upon the river alluvium, to which M. Sundevall's peregrinations here were confined. The 'Agghin' (*Mirafra cantillans*, Jerdon) is a tolerably good songster, but excessively rare in the same broad tract of country, where it can be regarded merely as a casual visitant: and the best song-bird which M. Sundevall could have heard wild is the common Bengal lark (*Alauda gulgula*, Franklin), the notes of which very closely resemble those of the British skylark. Of arboreal songsters, the 'Dhyal' (*Copsychus saularis*) has a pleasing, desultory, robin-like ditty, delivered in short snatches, but without much variety; and the Bulbuls and a few other small birds have, at most, a few musical chirrups, which the common Black Bulbul (*Pycnonotus bengalensis*, nobis) connects into a continuous warble sometimes, during its breeding

season only. Some of the Drongos have agreeable loud notes, especially the 'Bhuchanga' (*Chaptia aenea*, Vieillot), but there is too much repetition of the same stave: and, lastly, the Mynahs, or 'Mainas,' and other *Sturnidæ*, and also the 'Bayas' (*Ploceus*), very commonly indulge in a loud screeching chatter, which, if song, can only by courtesy be termed musical. The *tout ensemble* is sufficiently humble, even though eked out by the melodious cooing of different kinds of Dove, and the more or less pleasing voices of sundry other tribes of birds, which may harmonize with the scenery around or derive interest from their associations.

M. Sundevall begins his list with *Oriolus melanocephalus*, L., respecting which I have only to remark that I can make nothing of the native name he assigns to it, unless it can mean *Huldea Bulbul* (i. e. 'Turmeric-coloured Bulbul'), which is not impossible. The bird is as familiar to every Bengalee as the blackbird and thrush are to the inhabitants of England; and seems to be universally known to Hindoos as the *Bānay-bo,oo*, or *Bania-ba,oo*, of the Musselmans, signifying 'goldsmith's wife,' but at the same time a sort of imitation of the bird's note. Adult females differ in no respect from adult males, except in not being quite so bright on the back: the black hood is alike in both, extending for some distance beyond the ear-coverts; whereas in the African *O. monachus* (Gm.), v. *larvatus*, Licht., v. *capensis*, Sw., it terminates in a line with the ear-coverts,—this being one of several constant differences by which the two species may be readily distinguished.

Turdus cafer apud Sundevall is my *Pycnonotus bengalensis*, being distinct from the allied African species, or *P. cafer* (verus), L.—*P. jocosus* is called *Sipahi Bulbul* about Calcutta, *Kurra Bulbul* at Chandernagore: the name *Sonna* (*sona*? 'golden') I never heard applied to it.

Dendrocitta rufa, No. 7 (p. 168). The Bengalee name of this bird should be spelt *Háricháchá*: it is also called *Takka-chór*, or 'Rupee-thief.'

Dicrurus macrocerus, Vieillot, No. 9. The name *Bhúchanga*, or *Boojoonga*, as M. Sundevall spells it, refers to the next species upon his list, the *Chaptia aenea*.

Tchitrea paradisi (No. 11) is the *Shah Bulbul* of the natives, which name M. Sundevall assigns erroneously to their *Chák-Dhyal* (*Leucocerca fuscoventris*, which is quite distinct from Mr. Jerdon's *L. pectoralis*).

Muscicapa parva apud Sundevall (No. 15), the *Turra* of the Bengalees, is the *M. leucura*, Gm.; a closely allied, but I believe a distinct species from the European *M. parva*. The rufous throat is obtained by the males only, at the commencement of the hot weather. The name *Toontoonu*, which he cites, belongs properly

to the little tailor-bird (*Orthotomus longicauda*), but is popularly applied to various other small birds, as especially the different species of *Phylloscopus*, which are probably mistaken for the tailor-bird.

Pericrocotus peregrinus (L.), No. 16. The name *Páwi* appertains to *Sturnia malabarica*. M. Sundevall's *Phaenicornis flammea*, No. 17 (p. 251), is *Per. speciosus* (Lath.), distinct from *P. flammeus* of South India and Ceylon, which again differs from *P. igneus*, nobis, of the Malay countries.

Acanthiza trochiloides, Sund., has been since named by me *Phylloscopus reguloides*; and his *A. arrogans* is rightly assigned by himself to *Culicipeta Burkii* (Burton), the *Cryptolopha auricapilla*, Sw., &c. &c.

Orthotomus longicauda (No. 20) extends its range to Malacca, where however it is rather of a deeper colour, and it occurs there together with two other well-marked species, *O. edela*, Temm. (v. *Motacilla sepium*, Raffles), and *O. cineraceus*, nobis; both distinct from *O. sepium*, Horsf., of Java.

Iora typhia (distinct from *I. zeylonica* and *I. scapularis*) is known here by the names *Tas-feek* and *Phooteek-jol*; both imitative of certain of its notes, which much resemble those of the *Pari*. The affinity of this genus is with *Phyllornis*.

Malacocercus griseus (Gm.), No. 22, is peculiar to South India, being represented in Bengal by the *Merula bengalensis*, Brisson, which specific name should now stand, in preference to *M. terricolor*, Hodgson. Besides its common name *Chatarrhæa*, it is often called *Sát-bhyeá* (or 'seven brothers,' from its always associating in small troops).

Motacilla boarula is common here; also in the Malay countries, and it occurs even in Australia. M. Sundevall's *M. flava* agrees best with *Budytes cinereocapilla* of South Europe; and his *M. alba* is *M. luzoniensis*, Scopoli.

The Bengalee name *Tjorta* (meant for *Chawta*), which he assigns to *Anthus arboreus*, belongs properly to the common sparrow, but is often vaguely applied to any small brownish bird of about the size of a sparrow. His supposed *Anthus pallescens* is *A. malayensis*, Eyton. The described lark (No. 28) is *Alauda gulgula*, Franklin: and the common name here of *Pyrrhalauda grisea* (Scop.), No. 29, is *Dhoolo-chorai* (or 'Sand Sparrow'). *Fringilla bengalensis* apud Sundevall refers to *Ploceus philippensis* (L.), the well-known Baya; *P. bengalensis* and *P. manyar* occurring likewise.

Acridotheres tristis (L.), No. 32. The Bengalee name *Sálik* is generic, though often applied to this species without an adjunct: it is more distinctively termed *Ghór Sálik* ('House Mynah'), and sometimes *Bhátta Sálik*. *A. grisea* (Horsf.), the *Gracula crista-*

tella apud Sundevall (but quite distinct from *Acr. cristatellus* (Linn.) of China), is the *Jhónt Sálik*, or *Jhontee Maina* of the Musselmans (meaning 'Crested Mynah'). *Acr. ginginianus* is the *Gáng Sálik* (or 'Ganges Mynah,' from its inhabiting the river-banks). *Gracula intermedia* (p. 305) is the *Páháréá Maina* (or 'Hill Mynah'); and it is very rarely that the smaller species of South India and Ceylon, for which M. Sundevall mistakes it, is obtainable in the Calcutta bird bazaar. *Sturnus contra* is the *Ablacáh* ('Pied') of the Musselmans, and *Guay-lackrá* (or 'Dirt-eater') of the Hindoos. I have never heard it termed *Kalickia*.

The doubtfully cited *Corvus enca* (No. 38) is the *C. culminatus*, Sykes, the common Indian black crow, distinct from *C. macro-rhynchus*, Vieillot: both of these occur at Malacca.

The supposed *Hirundo rustica* (No. 39) must have been *H. gutturalis*, Scopoli, v. *H. jewan*, Sykes, &c. The other swallow seen was probably *H. daurica*.

The native name for Woodpeckers in general is *Kát-tókrá* (or literally, 'Woodpecker').

Bucco indicus, Lath., No. 44 (p. 397). Probably distinct from *B. philippensis* (verus). Its name is not "*Benebo*," which is a way of spelling the native appellation of the oriole; but *Bussunt-booree* is the equivalent for Barbet, the present species bearing the prefix of *chota* (or 'small'), and *B. asiaticus* (Lath.), v. *cyanicollis*, Vieillot, that of *Burra* (or 'large'). Both, as M. Sundevall remarks, are exceedingly common, and they are exclusively frugivorous.

Cuculus varius, Vahl (No. 46), is termed *Chók-gallo*; not *Sik-krea*, which means *Shikra* (or Hawk, *Chicquera*, auct.), for which a native will very commonly mistake a dead cuckoo, as I have observed repeatedly. And a living *Chók-gallo* in a cage will generally, by a dealer, be called *Bo,oo-cotáko*, in the hope of passing it off for that more highly-prized species, the *C. micropterus*, Gould.

Eudynamys orientalis (L.), No. 47, does not construct a nest, but lays its egg in that of a crow; the 'Kokeel's' (or female 'Coël's') egg much resembling a crow's egg in its colouring, being however considerably smaller. The name *Bhát Sálik* refers to *Acridotheres tristis*.

Centropus philippensis, Cuv. (No. 48), is known as the 'Kooká.' It is identical with *C. bubutus*, Horsfield, but not with *Cuculus bubutus* of Raffles, which is *Cent. eurycercus*, A. Hay. The latter is not Indian; but both species occur at Malacca, together with a third which is common to India and the Malay countries, *C. Lathamii* (Shaw), v. *lepidus*, Horsfield, and the adult of which was termed by me *C. dimidiatus*, and more recently *C. rectunguis* by

Mr. Strickland (p. 134 *ante*). The three seem to be equally common at Malacca.

Merops viridis, L. (p. 50). Termed *Bans-puttee* (or 'Bamboo-leaf') from the look of the bird as it sits with its wings closed. Very few remain in Lower Bengal after the hot season commences.

Halcyon gural, Pearson, v. *brunniceps*, Jerdon (No. 51). This and *H. amauropterus*, Pearson, are alike called *Ghórel*. *H. smyrnensis* is generally known as *Sádá-book Máth-rángá* (i. e. 'White-breasted Kingfisher'). *Ceryle varia*, Strickland (No. 54) is the *Photká Máth-rángá* (or 'Spotted Kingfisher'). I have seen this bird alight on the ground, but never *walk*; though it might creep a step or two. For some months past, I have had two individuals alive in a tolerably spacious aviary: they feed on shrimps and small fishes, and will at once descend to pick up a cockroach from the ground without alighting. In fact, I find that cockroaches, which are procurable here in profusion with the utmost facility, are favourite morsels with a great variety of birds, including especially all *Gallinaceæ* above the size of a quail. The Collared Pratincole runs up to receive one, and catches it in his mouth, sometimes springing up a few inches to do so; and even the *Porphyrio*, after disabling a cockroach with the beak, will take it up with his awkward-looking foot, and pick and eat it at his leisure. The Roller will live entirely upon them.

Palæornis torquatus (No. 55). 'Teah' is the Hindoo name, and 'Totah' the Musselman name. *P. cyanocephalus* (No. 56) is the 'Furreedee' of the Musselmans: and of *P. pondicerianus*, the red-billed male is called *Mudná*, and the black-billed female 'Kujlá.' The 'Heeráman' is *Eclectus polychloros*; and *E. grandis* is well known as the 'Lálman': both are common in the Calcutta bird shops; and they are grain-feeding birds, which have been improperly classed with the Lories. Several species of the latter are brought in some abundance, but nevertheless sell at a high price.

Falco tinnunculus (No. 58). The name *Shikra* is currently bestowed on any small hawk, but seems to belong properly to *Nisastur badius* (v. *F. Dussumieri*, Temm.); and larger hawks are generally styled *Báz*, which belongs properly to *Astur palumbarius*. Eagles with plumed tarsi are generally termed *Shah-báz*: and *Cheel* denotes 'Kite' (this name being evidently imitative of the *squeal* of the common *Milvus ater**), but it is also applied to other birds of smooth sailing flight, as the Harriers, and even the Gulls, which latter are called *Gáng Cheel* (i. e. *Gunga*- or

* Which, again, resembles that of the British Kite.

Ganges-Cheel). The *Haliastur pondicerianus* is commonly termed *Sankar-cheel*, and not unfrequently *Dhobeá-Cheel* (from its aquatic propensity, hovering over or sitting near a party of *Dhobees* or washermen.) The *Milvus ater* is distinctively termed *Pariah-Cheel*. No. 63 refers evidently to *Pontætus ichthyaëtus*, and this with other fishing eagles is called *Mátchál* or *Mátch-Kórol*.

M. Sundevall's doubtfully cited *Falco buteo* was, in all probability, *Buteo rufinus* (Ruppell), v. *B. canescens*, Hodgson: the next species noticed was probably *Blagrus dimidiatus* (Raffles): and the third was certainly not *Astur palumbarius*.—I have never heard *Leptoptilus argala* "called Eagle by the English," though it rarely is Pelican! Although the true Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaëtus*) inhabits the Himalaya, the so-called "Golden Eagle" of the residents at the hill stations refers always to the Lammergeyer (*Gypaëtus*).

Vultures are called *Shooknee* by the Hindoos, and *Gid* by the Musselmans. *Otogyps pondicerianus* is the *Lál Shooknee* of the former, and the *Mólnah Gid* of the latter. Neither of them distinguish the *Gyps indicus* (Scopoli and Latham, nec Temminck, which is the *G. tenuiceps* and *tenuirostris*, Hodgson and G. R. Gray), although this species is also common, keeping however more away from crowded towns.

Gallus ferrugineus (Gm.), No. 69, p. 87 *ante*. M. Sundevall is quite wrong in stating that any Hindoos ever breed fowls: the mere touch of one, or of an egg, is pollution even to the lowest caste of them. It should also be remarked, with reference to his note on the Indo-Portuguese population, that although, for the most part, much darker-skinned than the generality of Bengal Hindoos, excepting some of the lowest castes (in which the blood of the indigenes of the country greatly preponderates), these so-called Portuguese cannot justly be termed quite "as black as negroes;" and to me it appears obvious that they have derived their exceedingly dark complexion, not from the permanent influence of climate, but from intermixture and re-intermixture of blood with the lowest class of natives, till little indeed of the European stock remains in them. When I say *permanent* influence of climate, I mean that we must take into consideration that individual tanning produced by exposure, which does not become ingrained into the race, so as to be transmissible from parent to offspring. The prevalent belief here is, that the colour of the modern Indo-Portuguese illustrates the accumulative effect of an Indian climate during a long series of generations born in the country; but it is my thorough conviction that the foregoing explanation suffices. Indeed there is a current statement to the effect that no instance has been hitherto known of a continuous unmixed descent of any European race, born and brought up in

this country, to the third generation; but I doubt altogether, whatever may be the probability one way or the other, of our having sufficient data for arriving at so conclusive an opinion. As Jacquemont and others have remarked, the natives of India draw a wide distinction between the *Sahib logue* or European gentry, and the *Goras* or plebeian Europeans (the term *Gora* merely signifying 'fair,' and being applied by them to people of fair complexion, whether native or European; but as applied to the latter, in general referring exclusively to the class of sailors and private soldiers, and by no means in a complimentary sense, any more than 'Feringhee' is*). The *Sahib logue* are much respected by them as a class; the *Gora logue* considerably the reverse. Now, the children of the former, born in India, are, with extremely few exceptions, sent home when very young to be educated, which of course invalidates their claim for consideration in this question; though even if it did not, the influx of new European blood into this country is so great, that upon their return to India by far the greater proportion of them become united in marriage to individuals born in Europe, whence it would certainly be no easy matter to find a series of three generations of unmixed Indian-born Europeans of the *Sahib* class. As for the lower class of Europeans, it would be equally difficult to find such a series unmingled with country blood, besides that the sad prevalence of intemperance interferes materially with any conclusions that might otherwise be deduced.

M. Sundevall might well have sought in vain for traces of the wild *Gallus Sonneratii* in the domestic poultry of India, inasmuch as,—though, curiously enough, I have found that species of South India far more easily domesticable than the Bengal Jungle-fowl,—the latter is, beyond all question, the exclusive aboriginal stock from which the whole of our domestic varieties of common poultry have descended. However different these may be, whether the silky fowl of China, the gigantic Chittagong race, or the feather-legged bantams of Burmah, &c., their *voice* at once and unmistakeably proclaims their origin, and is as different as can be, in every cry, from that of *G. Sonneratii*: besides that we continually meet with common domestic cocks which correspond, feather by feather, with the wild bird; the peculiar notched comb of which is again retained invariably, even when the comb is double or compound: this much premised, however, it is remarkable that the domestic poultry of India do not approximate the wild race in any respect more closely than the common fowls of Europe, and I have sought in vain for traces of intermixture of Jungle-fowl blood in districts where the species abounds in a state of nature.

* Thus, at least, in Calcutta and its vicinity.

It is a curious instance of how little is currently known of the zoology of India, that, to this day, authors who write on the history of the common fowl generally repeat the statement that "its original stock is very uncertain; but it is supposed to be descended from a wild species still met with in the island of Java!" The truth being, that the genuine wild common fowl is familiarly known to every sportsman in all Northern India, and is with justice highly prized as a game-bird: abounding in all suitable localities from the sub-Himalayan region on the north, to the Vindhyan range on the south, and spreading farther southward along the eastern coast of the peninsula to some distance beyond Vizagapatam (in the 'Northern Circars'); while to the eastward it likewise abounds in Assam, and all along the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal throughout the Burmese countries, the Malayan peninsula, Java and Sumatra*. *G. Sonneratii* begins to replace it on the Vindhyan range of hills, bordering the great table-land of the peninsula of India to the northward, and wholly replaces it in Southern India generally; while in Ceylon two other wild species occur, the hen of one of these being figured by the name of *G. Stanleyi* in Hardwicke's 'Illustrations' †.

The different species of Jungle-fowl have hitherto been caricatured in the figures that have been meant to represent them, the types of which are alone to be met with in the poultry-yard. The general figure is remarkably pheasant-like, and the tail commonly droops, and I have never seen it more elevated than that of a pheasant sometimes is (though it is more raised in *G. Sonneratii*). A very characteristic feature of the Bengal bird, and which I have seen in all Indian examples of the species, including some from Tipperah, did not occur in such as I have had alive from Assam and from Arracan, nor have I ever seen it well shown in a domestic fowl: this consists in the vivid whiteness of the large round lappet of naked skin below the ear-coverts, which thus forms a well-defined and very conspicuous auricle-like patch, contrasting strongly with the crimson of the comb and other naked parts, and with the deep red-orange of the adjoining feathers. This lappet is of a bright dead-white tinged with blue in the hen; and it certainly helps much to ornament those which possess it. The only other variation which I have observed in many dozens of skins, from the most various localities, is that Himalayan specimens, both cocks and hens, are slightly paler,

* In Irwin's memoir on Afghanistan, J. A. S. B. viii. p. 1007, it is stated that this bird is found in the wild state in the whole of Turkistan, especially Balkh. This is a considerable extension of its range, as generally understood.—E. B.

† One of the Ceylon species has been named *G. Lafayettii*, but I do not know by whom.

while those from Malacca and Java are in general deeper-coloured than the Jungle-fowl of Bengal. The latter are as true to their normal colouring as any other wild species; and it is strange that the peculiar minute mottling of the feathers of the wild hen can scarcely ever be matched in the plumage of the domestic hens, at least in this part of the country.

Capt. Hutton assures me that the Jungle-fowl is strictly monogamous; and I have been told the same by several Shikárees; though others maintain that it resembles domestic poultry in this particular. In the former case an analogy might be traced with the common duck (*Anas boschas*), which regularly pairs when wild, and is polygamous (or indiscriminate is perhaps a better word) in a state of domestication. The British pheasant on the contrary is undoubtedly polygamous in a wild state, being well known even to extend his attentions sometimes to the inmates of the poultry-yard. A Sonnerat's fowl in my possession, which is as tame as any barn-door cock, and breeds as freely with common hens, certainly paired with one for some time, and would take not the least notice of other hens; but to induce him to do so, I cooped up his partner for a few days, when he soon took to another, and upon my releasing the former he seemed to think it best to remain lord of both, and has continued so ever since, while he exhibits a considerable aversion to some Burmese bantam hens that are likewise kept with him*.

Although the range of the wild common fowl does not extend westward, that I am aware of, beyond the mountains that form the natural boundary of India in that direction, the domestic bird appears to have been common among the western nations from the remotest traceable antiquity; and this Indian bird is raised even in Iceland. Among the old Egyptian paintings, it is very remarkable that no representation of a fowl has yet been found; notwithstanding all that has come down to us of the wholesale system of egg-hatching practised to this day in Egypt; and al-

* I have already, from the middle of February to that of June, had upwards of seventy hybrid chickens hatched (besides failures) from this Sonnerat's fowl and his two hens; putting the eggs of course under other sitting hens: and if fewer eggs have been produced of late, it is because the hens (which were selected with much care, and are difficult to match) are now getting exhausted. The young hybrids are much more delicate than common poultry, and I have had the misfortune to lose nearly all of them by a malignant *variola*; though some are now nearly grown up, which are already showing symptoms of a disposition to breed; and hence I doubt not that I shall be able to ascertain from them whether species so nearly allied as are their parents might not produce a fertile race of hybrids, i. e. *per se et inter se*, or hybrid with hybrid. The *Pavo indicus* and *P. muticus* would also suit well for such an experiment: and I may remark, that I have now a female Axis Deer pregnant by a Hog Deer; and a pair of hybrids thus produced are likely to be again mutually prolific, if any would be so.

though so many other kinds of animals, both wild and tame (including flocks of domestic geese very commonly), are represented again and again. The camel forms another such exception. In the frescos of the Etruscan tombs the domestic fowl is often represented; and also the eating of eggs; while egg-shells, the remains of the funeral feast, are generally observed strewed about the floor upon opening a previously unviolated sepulchre. As in the case of the bull, cow, ox, calf, &c., so in that of the bird under consideration, there is no *exclusive* general name applicable to all individuals of the species, of whatever sex or age, in at least the generality of European languages. *Fowl* applies, of course, to any bird, as *cock* and *hen* apply to the sexes of other species; and this general absence of a vernacular specific appellation of itself indicates how familiar were our remote ancestors with an exotic species, which they must ultimately have derived or perhaps even brought with them from the far East. I must close however this long digression, but in the hope of having awakened some interest in a subject which assuredly is well worthy of further inquiry.

A word or two may be added on the Turkeys now raised in this country. They are called 'Pérú,' evidently from the common cry of a turkey; and are regarded as unclean by the Musselmans, though it is very clear that the indicter of the Koran could not have prohibited to his followers this American bird: the tuft of bristles upon its breast indicates, as they fancy, a certain affinity to the unclean beast; and perhaps the bald head and neck may suggest some sort of relationship to the Vultures (especially *Otogyys pondicerianus*), which would scarcely be commendatory of this noble bird as an article of diet. Those brought to Calcutta are chiefly, if not wholly, raised in Chittagong, and most of them are bought up by people of French descent to be fattened at Chandernagore, when they are resold at considerable profit for the table. All are of a black colour, and very degenerate from the race of tame turkeys in England. They are small, with the naked wattles and long pendulous appendage over the beak enormously developed: poor helpless creatures, utterly incapable of rising upon the wing; and if suffered to drink their fill, they will greatly incommode themselves by filling out the immense craw. Nevertheless they fatten well and are excellent eating; and one at least is sacrificed for every dinner party.

M. Sundevall's Partridge (No. 70 of his list) is *Perdix pondiceriana*, Gm., a very abundant species. Wild peafowls inhabit all suitable localities, and where protected become extremely numerous, and far from timid. They differ in no respect from the ordinarily coloured tame peafowl of Europe.

The *Pavo bicalcaratus*, L., apud Sundevall, is without doubt *Polyplectron bicalcaratum*, Temm., of Mr. G. R. Gray's list of the British Museum collection; but I suspect this is the true *Pavo tibetanus*, auct., which, though assuredly not a Tibetan species, is common in the hill regions of Assam, Sylhet, Arracan, and I believe the Tenasserim provinces: while its representative, equally abundant in the Malayan peninsula, I take to be *P. bicalcaratum* (L.), the *P. Hardwickii*, Gray, of Hardwicke's 'Illustrations' (his *P. lineatum* being the female of the preceding species). The former is occasionally brought alive to Calcutta; but I have never seen the Malayan species alive.

No. 75. That the 'Hargilah' (*Leptoptilos argala*) lives "chiefly" on human corpses, does not at all comport with my observation. Many frequent the provision-bazaars, and particularly a large abattoir in the vicinity of Calcutta; and they pick up quantities of refuse thrown into the streets: not but that they do attack human bodies of course; but this I have rarely happened to witness, and the latter constitute an article of food that certainly forms but an insignificant item of their weekly diet. A much greater number than M. Sundevall intimates may commonly be seen of an evening perched on the top of Government House, and upon other eminences which command an extensive view: they continue as tame in Fort William as he describes, but would certainly not make resistance if attacked unless wounded and unable to rise.

No. 78. I have seen no Indian specimen of a heron according with Dr. Horsfield's figure and description of his *Ardea speciosa*. The species meant is *Ardeola leucoptera* apud Gray, which in breeding dress is *A. Grayi*, Sykes, and in non-breeding dress *A. malaccensis*, auctorum.

No. 86. It is clear to me that M. Sundevall did not distinguish between *Gallinago media* and *G. stenura*. At the commencement and close of the cold season, the latter is the more abundant species; in the intermediate period the former. *G. major* does not occur, and the woodcock very rarely. *G. stenura* is the prevalent Malayan species, and extends to China and Australia.

Charadrius cirripedesmos, Wagler (No. 90). This common little Indian plover I take to be *Hiaticula Leschenaultii* (Lesson).

Larus ridibundus, var. (No. 91). This is *L. brunnicephalus*, Jerdon. The true *L. ridibundus* also occurs, but less numerously. I have never chanced to see either of them upon a dead body, and they certainly exhibit no peculiar predilection for the maggots there found; though, like other gulls, they would of course readily take to such food, especially when hungry. The general mode of life does not differ from that of *Larus ridibundus* in Eng-

land. The large gull alluded to was probably *L. ichthyaëtus*, Pallas, which abounds at the mouth of the river, and has a jet-black hood in the breeding season.

The small cormorant (No. 92) is *Graculus pygmæus*, the only species of the genus I have met with in Lower Bengal.

No. 94 is *Casarca rutila* (Pallas); here commonly termed *Chuckwá-chuckwee*. *Ráj-háns* applies exclusively to the true Geese.

With M. Sundevall I consider the domestic geese of Bengal to be a hybrid race between *A. cygnoides* of China and the European tame goose, *A. cinereus*, which latter is here a regular cold-weather visitant. *Anas boschas* does not occur here wild; though it is found up the country.

No. 97 is *Dendrocygna awsuree* (Sykes), and I believe identical with *Anas arcuata*, Horsfield; more especially as this common Indian species is equally abundant at Malacca.

In the foregoing remarks upon M. Sundevall's paper, I have been particular to correct some of the native names assigned to various species, that they should not in future be quoted wrongly in systematic works. That gentleman undoubtedly made good use of the opportunities afforded by his brief sojourn in this vicinity.

June 24, 1847.

P.S. I avail myself of this occasion to remark on a few other oriental species of birds, descriptions of which have lately appeared in the 'Annals.'

Mr. Strickland's *Centropus rectunguis* (vol. xix. p. 134) I have already referred to *C. Lathamii* (Shaw), v. *dimidiatus*, nobis.—His *Phyllornis moluccensis*, Gray (p. 130), is surely the *Turdus cochinchinensis*, Gm., founded on *le Verdin de la Cochinchine* of Buffon. Arracan specimens merely differ in having the crown yellower, while the breast, immediately below the black throat, is scarcely tinged with yellow as in the Malacca specimens; but the two cannot be separated, nor are probably these differences constant. *Ph. cæsmarynchus* of Tickell is my *Ph. Jerdoni*; the former name being evidently a misprint for *casmarrhynchus* (vide Griffith's version of Cuvier's 'Animal Kingdom'), which again is a misprint for *gampsorhynchus* of Jardine and Selby.—*Turdus modestus*, Eyton, must be referred to *T. rufulus*, Drapiez, in the 'Dict. Class. d'Hist. Nat.'—P. 132. I recognise three well-marked species of Shrike in the synonyms which Mr. Strickland has brought together: viz. *L. phœnicurus*, Pallas, common to India and the Malay countries; *L. superciliosus*, Lath., which with the next is never found in India; and *L. tigrinus*, Drapiez, v. *mag-*
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nirostris, Lesson, and *strigatus*, Eyton, the adults of which are very dissimilar from those of the two other species.

In the reprint from Capt. Begbie's work (xvii. 395), the *Buceros lugubris* of that gentleman is the only species which I shall here refer to, it being the adult male of *B. sumatranus*, Raffles. There are numerous errors of identification in that paper which I shall have another opportunity of correcting. The reduction of nearly all of Mr. Eyton's "apparently new species of birds from Malacca" (xvi. 227) has been effected partly by myself in the 'Journ. As. Soc. Bengal,' xv. 10 and 52, and the rest by Mr. Strickland, *vide* p. 129, &c. *ante*.

XL.—*Description of a new species of Hymenopterous Insect belonging to the family Sphegidae.* By FREDERICK SMITH.

[With a Plate.]

Section ACULEATA.

Family SPHEGIDÆ.

Genus *Stethorectus*, Smith.

HEAD large, as wide as the thorax, subquadrate, attenuated posteriorly; eyes large, oval; the stemmata placed in a triangle at the vertex; the antennæ gradually attenuated, inserted near the base of the clypeus, which is quadridentate in front, the two exterior teeth largest. Mandibles large, stout, arcuate, smooth exteriorly; the maxillary palpi six-jointed, the terminal joint very minute; the labial palpi four-jointed, the terminal joints conical. Thorax elongate, the collar elongate, of a pyramidal form above; the superior wings with one marginal and three submarginal cells, the first as long as the two following, the second nearly quadrate, slightly narrowed towards the marginal, receiving the first and second recurrent nervures. The posterior legs elongate. Abdomen ovato-conical, abruptly petiolated.

Sp. ingens. Female (length 2 inches 2 lines). Black, very smooth and shining. Head slightly attenuated posteriorly, a little black pubescence on the face above the base of the antennæ, a smooth depression on each side of the posterior stemmata running a little way backwards, a thin pubescence on the cheeks. Thorax slightly pubescent at the sides, a strongly marked epaulet passing over each tegula and reaching as far as the scutellum, which is very smooth and shining; the wings dark metallic blue; the metathorax opaque, having above a deep longitudinal channel, which is, as well as on each side of it, transversely wrinkled; the apex transversely sulcate; towards the apex, laterally, is a smooth space



Blyth, Edward. 1847. "XXXIX.—A few critical remarks on M. Carl J. Sundevall's Paper on the birds of Calcutta, as republished by H. E. Strickland, Esq." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 20, 382–394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/037454809496075>.

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