

Mr. Houstoun next proposed that the Society request Mr. H. V. Bayley to accept the Joint Secretaryship of the Asiatic Society, but on the President pointing out that there being no vacancy in the Council such a procedure would be against the rules of the Society, he withdrew the motion.

Mr. Houstoun then wanted to know what communications are, as a matter of course and in what stage, to be laid before the Society, and for what communications the Society must depend upon the Council?

The President, in reply, referred him to Bye-laws 64, 77, 78 and 79.

Mr. Houstoun also wished to know by whose advice and authority the niche has been made in the Society's meeting-room to the obstruction of a proper circulation of air.

The Secretary stated that the niche had been built and the cast of Sir P. Cautley's bust placed there with the sanction of the Council.

Communications were received—

1. From E. Blyth, Esq. submitting a report on a zoological collection from the Somáli country.

2. From Capt. Tickell, the description of a new species of *Buceros* from Tenasserim.

3. From B. H. Hodgson, Esq. Comparative Vocabulary of the languages of the broken tribes of Nepal.

The Secretary exhibited to the meeting MS. of a Limboo work supposed to be the only work extant in that character, belonging to Capt. Mainwaring and kindly left by that gentleman for exhibition.

The Librarian and Curator of the Zoological Department submitted their usual monthly reports.

Report for May Meeting, 1855.

Our gatherings for the last month consist of

1. The collection from the Somáli country made by Lt. Speke, of the 46th N. I., and forwarded to the Society by Lt. Burton, in command of the expedition into that region. Upon this I have elsewhere reported.

2. We have received two packages of bird-skins, from Lt. Alex. J. Trotter, of the Bengal Artillery, Pesháwur. The most remarkable specimens are the European Rook (*CORVUS FRUGILEGUS*), which was previously observed in Afghanistan by Capt. Hutton,—the *PASSER SALICICOLUS* (Vieillot, v. *hispaniolensis*, Tem.), also obtained in Afghanistan by Capt. Hutton,—and *EMBERIZA ESCLAVONICA*, Brisson (v. *E. pithyornis*,

Pallas, and *E. albida*, nobis), previously obtained by Capt. Hutton in the Tyne range between Masuri and Simla. The European Jackdaw (*CORVUS MONEDULA*), as well as the Rook, occurs at Pesháwur; and the former of these is very common in Kashmir.*

3. Babu Rajendra Mallika. A dead Monkey, *MACACUS CYNOMOLGOS*.

4. J. Uvedale, Esq. A small snake, which fell down from a cocoa-nut tree in the neighbourhood. The species appears to be undescribed, and may rank as

DIPSAS HEXAGONOTUS, nobis. Specimen evidently quite young; but well distinguished from the common *D. TRIGONATA* by a series of broad hexagonal scales, commencing at the occiput and continued along the whole back. The lateral scales (towards the abdominal plates) are distinctly grooved. Head as in *D. TRIGONATA* and various affined species. Colour of specimen bright ruddy-ferruginous, inclining to coral-red; paler below, and mottled with black bordering some of the scales of the upper-parts. Head green, the throat white, and the labial plates posterior to the eye yellow: a slight blackish occipital streak. Scutæ 247: scutellæ 126 pairs. Rows of scales 21. Length of specimen 18 in., of which tail 4 in. It probably grows to a large size, and may become wholly green.

We take this opportunity to remark, that we are at present in temporary possession of a fine living specimen of the *GRUS AUSTRALASIANA*, Gould (or 'Native Companion' of the Australian colonists); which, until recently, was supposed to be identical with *GR. ANTIGONE*, (L.), or the Indian *Sáras* or *Surhuns*. Mr. Gould's figure of it, in the 'Birds of Australia,' is far from being one of his best. The Australian Crane has much more of the aspect of *GR. VULGARIS*, Pallas; but is considerably larger, with the head bare and papillose to just below the conspicuous patch of grey ear-coverts, and a dewlap-like throat-wattle or pendulous lappet of skin (of a black colour with red or carneous anterior edge), which is

* In a letter dated April 22nd, Lt. Trotter remarks—"I observe that those flights of *PASSER SALICICOLUS* have begun again this month; and I am afraid that their appearance is a sign of the approaching hot weather. They fly in large flocks towards sunset, in every direction, and turn about all at one time." Again, after a visit to Kohat, he writes—"I saw immense flocks of *PASSER SALICICOLUS* at Kohat, where it is called the 'Kabul Sparrow.' They roost in thousands on the trees there, and we fired once or twice at them, and knocked over upwards of 50 at one shot. I even heard that 117 had been brought down at a single shot." Lt. H. M. Drummond, of H. M. 42nd Regt., notices the highly gregarious character of this species in Barbary, where it is the common House Sparrow of the country. *Vide Ann. Mag. N. H. XVI, 107.*

peculiar and characteristic. In GR. ANTIGONE, the red papillose skin of the neck extends down about 4 in. below the grey ear-coverts, which form a smaller patch than in the Australian bird. Both species have the crown slaty, and bright orange-yellow irides; but as seen from a little distance, the Australian shews conspicuously a crimson occiput with contrasting black throat-wattle, the cheeks being of a paler red; while the Indian exhibits a much greater extent of crimson on the neck and throat, with some black bristle-like plumes on the throat, occiput, and upper part of the neck, more or less developed in different individuals. The legs of the Australian species are shorter than in GR. ANTIGONE; being of the same proportions and of the same dusky slate-colour as in GR. VULGARIS: whereas those of GR. ANTIGONE are crimson-roseate. The tarsi, in GR. ANTIGONE, measure 12 to 12½ in.; in our specimen of GR. AUSTRALASIANA, but 10¼ in. The latter has the plumage uniformly ash-grey, with the lengthened tertiaries neither curled as in GR. VULGARIS, nor albescent as in GR. ANTIGONE. In the *vivarium* of Babu Rajendra Mallika, there are, at the present time, several dozens of GR. ANTIGONE, and also of GR. VULGARIS and of GR. VIRGO; and we remark that about the month of April all of the first species (or *Sáras*) assume a broad pure white collar immediately below the crimson papillose skin of the neck: they then illustrate the *Gr. torquata*, (Latham), Vieillot, which accordingly is merely GR. ANTIGONE in its nuptial plumage. We have known instances of the *Sáras* breeding in captivity, when a pair is allowed the range of a large walled garden (protected from Jackals), containing shallow inundated enclosures for the growth of rice: in these the nest is commenced under water, and raised for some inches above the surface; and the eggs are two in number, about 3¾ in. long by 2½ in. broad, of a bluish-white with a few distantly placed rufous specks and blotches. The young follow their parents from the first (unlike those of the ARDEADÆ), and have the head and neck *clad with feathers* of a dull light ferruginous colour, which begin to fall when the bird is more than half-grown. Besides the three Indian species of Crane here mentioned (of which the *Sáras* alone is known to breed in the country), a fourth occurs as a great rarity in the N. W., the GR. LEUCOGERANOS, Pallas (white, with black primaries, bald face, and pinkish-red legs). This fine species was procured by Burnes in Afghánistán; and we have been assured that it has been occasionally observed in Rájastán. Schlegel even gives Bengal as a habitat (which we cannot but think requires confirmation, even though skins may have been received *viâ* Bengal)! A fifth Asiatic Crane exists in GR. MONTAGNESIA, (C. L. Bonap.), from Mantchuria; a sixth in GR. VIPIO, Pallas, which chiefly inhabits the extreme east, as the Corea, Japan, &c.; and there is

even another in Japan (besides also *GR. VULGARIS*),—the *GR. MONACHA* of Temminck.*

We may also here notice, that we have received from Robt. F. Tomes, Esq., of Welford (near Stratford-on-Avon), a large number of most carefully taken descriptions of the specimens of Indian Bats and Shrews in the British Museum and that of the Hon'ble E. I. Company in London; the actual specimens upon which Dr. Horsfield and Dr. J. E. Gray have founded and named sundry species. As regards the Shrews, Mr. Tomes has *independently* arrived at several conclusions identical with those expressed in the Memoir on the Indian species of Shrew, published *ante*, p. 24 *et seq.*: and, with reference to the *CROSSOPUS HIMALAYICUS*, Gray (p. 37 *ante*), he writes—"The specimen has the same dentition as *SOREX CÆRULESCENS*; but the teeth appear to me to have been pushed into the mouth from the outside, and no doubt belong to some other animal,—the skull having been removed, and these teeth introduced to conceal it [!] It is a good species; and, I think, has the tail ciliated, but having been slit up along the under-part by the skinner, it is difficult to determine." He also remarks that "*SOREX CAUDATUS*, Hodgson, is certainly very closely allied to *S. ALPINUS* of Europe, if not identical with it" (*vide* also p. 37 *ante*). Our *SORICULUS* (p. 36) is probably identical with *BLABIA*, Gray. Mr. Tomes believes *S. CÆRULESCENS* and *S. indicus* to be "of one species. *S. MURINUS*," he adds, "is also very nearly allied, but has the fur much longer and of a much browner colour, and it looks coarser. *S. GRIFFITHII*" (apparently *murinus* apud nos, not the Malayan *MURINUS*), "is evidently distinct, having a totally different kind of fur, larger teeth, and different dimensions. *S. NIGER* of Elliot is a miniature of *V. GRIFFITHII*, but with a long and slender tail. All of these are of the same type as *S. CÆRULESCENS*." †

* For a Conspectus of the species of Crane, *vide* the Prince of Canino in the *Comptes Rendus*, XL, 720 (April 2nd, 1855).

† The following is a new species of typical *SOREX*, recently received from Capt. Berdmore, of Schwe Gyen, Pegu.

S. FULIGINOSUS, nobis. Length of adult female (taken out of spirit) $5\frac{1}{2}$ in., of which tail $2\frac{1}{4}$ in.: foot *plus* $\frac{5}{8}$ in. Skull exactly 1 in. long, and $\frac{7}{16}$ in. in greatest diameter: length of series of upper teeth $\frac{7}{16}$; and breadth of palate $\frac{1}{8}$ in. Soles bare to the heel. Tail with seventeen vertebræ, and perhaps a minute eighteenth at tip; the scattered long hairs upon the tail small and fine. Fur dense, porrect, somewhat velvety; dark slaty at base, the rest fuliginous-brown, with inconspicuous dull hoary tips: beneath scarcely (if at all) paler. A second specimen merely differs in having a trifle smaller.

As Mr. Tomes will probably edit a reprint of the Memoir referred to, it is unnecessary to go further into detail here with the Shrews; and with regard to the Bats, as we hope to prepare a similar Memoir on the Indian species of this ordinal group, it will suffice, in the present instance, to note a few identifications of some interest.

Mr. Tomes remarks, that—"Specimens of PLECOTUS, and of BARBASTELLUS, from Nepal, forwarded by Mr. Hodgson to the museum of the Hon'ble E. I. Company, are perfectly identical with examples of the same genera from my own collection, taken here [in England], and which are now placed by the side of the Indian specimens in Dr. Horsfield's case." (Vide also *J. A. S.* XXI, 360). We have also minutely and carefully compared European and Masuri specimens of SCOTOPHILUS SEROTINUS and SC. LEISLERI (v. *dasycarpus*), and can detect no difference whatever; the latter species varying in shade of colour. *Vesp. labiata*, Hodgson, does not appear to have been, as yet, properly compared with the European NOCTULINIA ALTIVOLANS; in other words, sufficiently good specimens of each have not hitherto been compared together: but there seems to be little doubt of their identity. MYOTIS MURINUS of Masuri accords minutely with the descriptions of the European species: and perhaps V. PALLIDIVENTRIS, Hodgson, may yet prove identical with the European M. PIPISTRELLUS; so far as we can judge from specimens of the former, presented to the Society's museum by Mr. Hodgson, but unfortunately in bad condition, there is no difference whatever in size and structure from the European PIPISTRELLUS; but the fur of M. PALLIDIVENTRIS would seem to be more ruddy (and tending to *vinaceous*) above, and also more albescent on the lower-parts. Two affined but distinct species exist in M. PARVIPES, nobis (*J. A. S.* XXII, 581), from Masuri, and M. THEOBALDI, nobis (*pallidiventris* apud nos, *ibid.*), from Kashmir. The latter is remarkable for the comparative great size of its foot, which with claws measures $\frac{7}{16}$ in.; and for its non-rufous dark dull brown fur above, and more or less albescent on the lower-parts.

E. BLYTH.

LIBRARY.

The following books have been added to the library since the 3rd of April last.

Presented.

Natuurkundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië, Vol. VII. Nos. 5 and 6, and Vol. VIII. Nos. 1 and 2.—BY THE EDITORS.

The Journal of the Indian Archipelago, Vol. VIII. Nos. 7 to 9, 2 copies.—BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.