



J Wolf lith

M&N Harhart imp.

TCHITREA CORVINA.

XIX.—*On the Land-Birds of the Seychelles Archipelago.*

By EDWARD NEWTON, M.A., C.M.Z.S.

(Plate IV.)

THE Seychelles Archipelago, a dependency of Mauritius, consists of about thirty islands, and is situated between $3^{\circ} 42'$ and $4^{\circ} 50'$ lat. S., and between $55^{\circ} 15'$ and $56^{\circ} 2'$ long. E. It was discovered by Vasco di Gama in 1502, was taken possession of by the French in 1742, and ceded to England by the treaty of 1815. Its formation, with the exception of, I believe, three islands, Frégate, Denis, and Bird Island, which are coralline, is granitic; its highest mountain, the Morne Blanc, in Mahé, is said to be 3000 feet high. Silhouette, as I should judge, rises to above 2000 feet, Praslin and Ladigue to 1500 feet, and none of the others to 1000 feet.

The Dependency is in charge of a Civil Commissioner, who resides at Port Victoria, Mahé. A French *patois*, called "Creole," is universally spoken by the lower class, but English is understood by a good many. The population in 1861 was 7486, that of Mahé being 6118; the greater part of it is made up of different African races, and a mixture between them and Europeans.

The principal industry is the cultivation of cocoa-nut trees and expressing the oil from the nut. The value of this article exported in 1865 exceeded £20,000, and is from extended cultivation steadily increasing; no use is made of the husk, so the value of the plantations is not yet fully realized. The other exports are vacoa-bags, salt fish, and timber. The vacoa-bags are woven from the leaves of the *Pandanus utilis*, and are used at Mauritius for containing the exported sugar. With the exception of the cocoa-nut, which comparatively requires little or no care, planting may be said to be at a discount, though the soil is exceedingly rich and fertile, and sufficient rice, maize, and farinaceous roots might be grown at small cost to support the entire population; but, as it is, a few acres only are planted, and large quantities of rice are imported to supply the deficiency. Fishing is by far the most popular employment; all the men are boatmen, and capital ones they make.

Mahé*, the largest and most important of these islands, is about 17 miles long and 5 wide; the other larger islands are Praslin and Ladigue to the north-east, and Silhouette to the north-west. These are high and rocky, with a considerable tract of forest still remaining upon them.

After these general remarks I must proceed to the particular subject of this paper. Ornithologists are aware that the avifauna of these interesting islands is very little known, and what few land-birds recorded as existing there were not recorded as occurring elsewhere. Prior to the year 1865 only four species were known; they were:—

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| (1) <i>Tinnunculus gracilis.</i> | | (3) <i>Erythræna pulcherrima.</i> |
| (2) <i>Nectarinia dussumieri.</i> | | (4) <i>Turtur rostratus.</i> |

Tinnunculus gracilis was described by Lesson (Tr. d'Orn. p. 93) from specimens in the Paris Museum, that author being unaware of the locality whence they came; and it is accurately figured by M. O. des Murs (Icon. Orn. pl. 25) from two specimens in the Paris collection, which were discovered at Seychelles in 1827 by Dussumier, and probably the same as those described by Lesson. These are the only two original descriptions of the species with which I am acquainted. Dr. Hartlaub, however, mentions (Ornith. Madag. p. 19) that M. Jules Verreaux had examined specimens of this species in Sganzin's collection; but on reference to the latter's "Notes sur les Mammifères et sur l'Ornithologie de l'Île Madagascar" †, there seems no reason to suppose that these specimens were killed at Seychelles, but rather at the island of St. Marie, a French colony, off the east coast of Madagascar, of which Sganzin was governor, or on the "grande île Africaine" itself, and therefore belong to the allied species, the distinctness of which was pointed out by Mr. J. H. Gurney (Ibis, 1863, p. 34).

Nectarinia dussumieri was first described by Dr. Hartlaub (Journ. für Orn. 1860, p. 340) from two specimens in the Paris

* This island, as well as the place of the same name on the south-west coast of India, has its name from that of Mahé de Labourdonnais of historical celebrity.

† Mém. de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Strasbourg, iii. 1840, p. 49.

Museum, collected by Dussumier. I am not aware of any other recorded specimens. Dr. Hartlaub afterwards altered the name to *N. seychellensis* (Orn. Madag. p. 35), without, however, stating his reasons for so doing.

Erythræna pulcherrima was correctly described and drawn by Sonnerat under the name of "Pigeon violet à tête rouge d'Antigue"* (Antigue being the port of the island of Panay, and not the island of Antigua in the West Indies as has been supposed). Sonnerat had, previously to his visit to Panay, touched at Seychelles; and I can only suppose that some confusion must have existed in his collections, and that he had mistaken the locality from which he had obtained the species. Since then many specimens have been brought to Europe, and it is the best known of Seychelles birds in collections.

Turtur rostratus was named by Bonaparte (Consp. Av. ii. p. 62) from a specimen in the Paris Museum, brought from Seychelles by Dussumier. I can find no record of any other specimen in European collections.

In 1864, Lady Barkly obtained from Seychelles a live bird, called there the "*Pie chanteuse*;" it lived for about two months, and on its death she very kindly gave it to me; it proved to be an undescribed species, and has been named *Copsychus sechellarum* (Ibis, 1865, p. 331, pl. viii.).

Now, from the above, it will be seen that hitherto only five land-birds had been recorded as existing at Seychelles, and that these five were all peculiar to the Archipelago.

During a residence of upwards of seven years at Mauritius I had had no opportunity of visiting these islands, and I had procured but very few specimens from them; accordingly I determined, when coming to Europe on leave, to stop a month on my way, the steamers of the French Company "*Messageries Impériales*" calling there regularly on their route between Mauritius and Aden.

I left Mauritius on the 18th of January last on board the steamer 'Emirne,' and arrived off St. Denis, Réunion, at sunrise on the following morning. As soon as we had obtained pratique I landed and called upon M. Lantz, of the Jardin des

* Voyage à la Nouvelle Guinée, p. 112, pl. 67.

Plantes. In the well-arranged museum in the garden there is probably the best collection in the world of Madagascar birds; but of those from the neighbouring islands it is, like our museum at Mauritius, lamentably deficient. Amongst the collection of Réunion birds I was surprised to see what I believed to be *Ardea schistacea*, a species not noticed in Mauritius, and which, M. Lantz assured me, was far from uncommon both in Réunion and in Madagascar; he had also a living bird, which he consigned to the care of M. Louis Berthelin, Agent de l'Administration des Postes, a zealous collector for the Société d'Acclimatation of Marseilles, who was a passenger on board the 'Emirne.'

We left St. Denis the same afternoon, and, after a voyage of continuously fine weather and without event, we sighted Seychelles at daybreak on the morning of the 24th. Mahé was on our port bow, while Frégate, Ladigue, and Praslin were on the starboard. Mahé as we approached it was beautiful—the outline rough and broken, the highest peaks hidden in mists, the mountains rising up almost immediately from the sea, leaving scarcely any flat ground at their bases. The coast is entirely fringed with verdant groves of cocoanut-trees, which in some places extend far up the slopes and valleys of the mountains; the trees being planted in regular rows up the incline, present from a distance the appearance of a vast beet-root garden. In other places may be seen scanty patches of cultivation, such as maize, rice, or sweet potatoes, or tracts of grass dotted here and there with clumps of shrubs, the land remaining altogether useless and unprofitable. But few houses are seen, as they are generally effectually screened from view by trees. These slopes rise to the height of 700 or 800 feet, and generally above them is a strip of natural bush or forest, the dead whitened stems of the Capucin tree standing prominently over the others. Then comes a perpendicular wall of granite, some 300 or 400 feet high, then a terrace with another strip of forest and another wall, and, last of all, forest on the top of the ridge. At two or three places on this side of the island broad spaces of red earth on the sides of the hills marked the sites of the landslips which occurred during the hurricane of October 1862, and which are still uncovered by vegetation.

At 8 A.M. we rounded the north end of St. Anne's, the largest of a chain of small islands which form the south-east side of the harbour, and came to anchor about four miles from Port Victoria.

Mr. Geoffrey Nevill (well known as a conchologist, and who had come from Mauritius with me in order to collect the shells and plants of these islands) and I soon after went on shore with Mr. Swinburne Ward, the Civil Commissioner, who had come off to the steamer, and landed at the jetty.

The town of Port Victoria is peculiar; the streets, which extend along the sea-wall, are simply well-made broad footpaths, separating the different "compounds" of the inhabitants. "These must be a great improvement on the old muddy tracks, overgrown with weeds and encumbered with stones, which existed before Mr. Ward's reign. Most of the houses are mere wooden boxes, each standing in its own dirty enclosure or "compound."

Through the middle of the town, down a narrow valley, a small stream flows to the sea from the foot of the Trois Frères, a mountain immediately behind the town. During the hurricane I before mentioned, a great landslip occurred near its source, and, sweeping down the narrow channel, brought an avalanche of earth and mud, with enormous rocks and trees, upon the houses by its side, overwhelming some, overturning others, and causing a frightful loss of life and property: for days dead bodies were being dug out from the mass, and many known to be lost were never recovered.

A similar landslip occurred at the same time about a mile to the south-east, bearing down on a house and carrying some of the unfortunate inhabitants even out to sea, and there burying them below high-water mark in mud of the consistency of hasty-pudding. The same hurricane blew down many cocoa-nut trees and destroyed provision-grounds, and, it is said, killed a great many birds. It was not, however, without its good effects, as it showed the necessity for widening the bed of the stream, clearing the paths of the stones and weeds which encumbered them, and giving a proper outlet for the waters. All these works have now been done. By passing a law compelling the inhabitants to contribute either money or labour

for making roads, these necessary works for the prosperity of a community are being rapidly pushed on by Mr. Ward, and probably by this time a good road has been completed from Victoria to Anse Nord-Ouest (North-west Bay) on the opposite side, and another for some seven miles along the south-east coast. With the increasing cocoa-nut plantations and the great improvement in the town and neighbourhood, Mahé may be considered to be in a most prosperous condition; and if there were only a little more energy in its inhabitants, it would soon become a very valuable possession.

My first few days at Mahé were employed in investigating the immediate vicinity of Port Victoria. I was much struck with the scarcity of fine flowering shrubs or plants, though this was the season of the north-west monsoon, the summer of Seychelles. Insect-life, too, was very scarce: during the whole month I was there I did not see three dozen individual butterflies; and Mr. Nevill, who caught every one he could, did not succeed in getting specimens of more than four species during that time. At night the stillness was unlike the tropics, hardly a cricket or *Cicada* to be heard; and one might have fancied one's self in Europe, so silent were the hours of darkness. Bird-life also was very scarce, both in species and individuals. Formerly birds were much commoner, said the Creoles, but have decreased owing to the ravages of rats, and cats and dogs which have taken to the bush. The "Pie chanteuse," which used to be familiar at most places, was said now to be extinct at Mahé*, and only to be found in reduced numbers at Praslin, Aride, and Marianne. The "Pigeon hollandais," I was told, became yearly rarer. The "Cateau vert," from the constant persecution against it brought on by its unfortunate partiality for ripe maize, was said to be nearly exterminated, and the "Cateau noir" only now to be found at Praslin.

Mr. Ward had kindly procured me a few live birds for the Zoological Society, and amongst them was the "Cateau noir" from Praslin; this bird is now alive in the Society's Gardens. He had also three skins of the "Cateau vert" killed at

* On my voyage home, however, I was told by a naval officer, who had been at the south end of the island, they were still to be found there.

Mahé. Both these species were new; and I described them at the Meeting of the Zoological Society on the 28th of March, naming the first *Coracopsis barklyi** in honour of Sir Henry Barkly, the Governor of Mauritius, and the second *Palæornis wardi*† to commemorate the donor.

The "Mangeur des poules" (*Tinnunculus gracilis*) I found to be tolerably common, but I never saw it very far from the sea; I had been told before I visited the islands that it fed chiefly on small shrimps, but in none of those I dissected did I find any. Lizards appear to be its principal food. I was told it only ate the eyes of its victims; but in several instances I found the entire animals had been eaten. The species, I fear, will soon become extinct: it is an exceedingly tame and foolish bird; and even after one has been fired at and missed, it will only fly a few yards and settle again. It affects the cocoa-nut groves, perching either on the branches of the tree or on the nuts, and I have no doubt generally breeds in these trees, though I was informed it did so in rocks as well, especially on the island of St. Anne.

The "Colibri" (*Nectarinia dussumieri*) I found to be very common; I saw it at Mahé, Praslin, Ladigue, Félicité, Marianne, and Silhouette. When I first arrived, the males I shot

* *CORACOPSIS BARKLYI.*

Coracopsis C. comorensi colorem admodum similis sed valde minor.

Descr. maris adulti.—Brunneo-niger, remigibus reetricibusque saturatioribus ardesiaco tinctis; rostro, cera pedibusque nigro-fuscis.

Long. tota circa 13, alæ 8·1, caudæ 6, acrotarsi 0·76, dig. med. sine ungue 1, hallucis sine ungue 0·48, maxillæ a fronte 0·95, ejusdem a rictu 0·95, mandibulæ 1·37 poll. Angl.

Fœmina mari similis sed minor.

† *PALÆORNIS WARDI.*

Palæornis P. alexandri similis sed rostro robustiore; fasciis humeralibus phœniceo-rubris, nucha sine fascia rubra.

Descr. adulti.—Pileo et gula cærulescentibus, genis ochraceo-iridibus, torquæ perignathico nigro a rictu ad nucham ducente; dorso alisque grammæo-iridibus; uropygio viridiori; singulis fasciis latis humeralibus phœniceo-rubris; remigibus et reetricibus saturate viridibus cæruleo lavatis, his subtus flavescens, fuscis illis; gastræo flavescens-iridi; rostro viride coccineo, apice pallidiori; pedibus fuscis.

Long. tota circa 16, alæ 7·75, caudæ 9, acrotarsi 0·75, dig. med. sine ungue 0·95, hallucis sine ungue 0·5, maxillæ a fronte 1·4, ejusdem a rictu 1·15, mandibulæ ab articulo 1·4 poll. Angl.

Fœmina vel *nas junior* mari adulto simillimus, sed coloribus obscurioribus.

did not show any yellow under the wing ; but at Marianne, on 12th February, I obtained two males which had the bright flame-coloured axillary tuft fully developed. At first I thought these were of a different species ; but on my return to Praslin and Mahé, and shooting several specimens, I found that all the males had then assumed their full plumage, which they evidently had not done when I shot my first specimen on the 25th January. The axillary tufts, so far as my experience goes, are not visible in the living bird, the feathers of the breast covering them entirely ; and I never observed them as Mr. Tristram did those of the allied species, *N. osea* (Ibis, 1865, p. 74), when the bird was singing. In habits the *Nectariniæ* resemble the *Certhiola* more than any other group with which I am acquainted—always restless, hanging head downwards to get at an insect on the under surface of a leaf, then flying off to a flower (not darting like a Humming-bird), and back again to the same tree. The male constantly sings from the top of a tree or from a dead and exposed branch. The song is hurried, but not unlike that of a Goldfinch. The ordinary call is one note quickly repeated three or four times. Mr. Nevill had two nests brought to him, one containing a young one almost fully fledged, the other an egg ; the nests were exactly like others of the family which have been described (Ibis, 1863, p. 302, and 1865, p. 76). The egg is greenish white-freckled, suffused and blotched with umber-brown chiefly at the larger end. It is .75 inch in length, and .41 in breadth.

The commonest bird in Mahé is the “Martin” (*Acridotheres tristis*), introduced from Mauritius, and now nearly as abundant as it is there. It may have been a successful rival to the “Pie chanteuse,” and in the struggle for existence helped the cats and rats to exterminate it in this part of the island. It is said not to thrive on all the islands.

“Tourterelle” (*Geopelia striata*), also introduced from Mauritius, is very common and tame ; I saw it all over the lower parts of the island I visited.

The snow-white “Goeland” (*Gygis candida*) is always to be seen flying round the clumps of badamier trees (*Terminalia*), on the horizontal branches of which, without constructing any

nest, it deposits its single egg—chasing one another and playing, generally three in the party, the young one and the two parents, for some minutes—and then retiring to rest in the shade, all three sitting in a row, a very happy family. On the day I arrived, I saw one sitting very tamely in a badamier tree close to Government House, and at about fifteen feet from the ground; on going immediately under her, I could see she was sitting on an egg, which was placed near the fork of two horizontal and nearly parallel branches, without any nest, so that the egg lay on the branches, between which it was visible from beneath; the egg would have hatched in a few days. On the 22nd of February I got another egg from the same spot, probably the produce of the same bird. The young are as white as their parents.

These four birds, and also a species of Swift, of what species I am uncertain, may be seen constantly in the immediate neighbourhood of the town; but to see any others it is necessary to go further into the island.

On the 26th January, while walking by the side of a small marsh at the Anse Nord-Ouest, I saw and shot two small Bitterns. These birds apparently are the same as specimens in the British Museum labelled as the *Ardeola lepida*, Horsf., from Java. Why this species should have found its way across the Indian Ocean, and have skipped Ceylon and other places, is more than I can say. It is quite different from the Madagascar species, *A. podiceps*, and from the European *A. minuta*. I was informed that it made its nest in bushes and laid white eggs. So far as I could learn, the species was nowhere numerous throughout the islands. In the same marsh I hunted in vain for “Poules d’eau,” which were said to be numerous; but I never was fortunate enough to meet with one there, and I am therefore ignorant of the species. This same afternoon, close to the town and on the sands, I shot a Plover (*Ægialites geoffroyi*) and a Stint (*Tringa minuta*), both of which species were common, and, while I was there, of daily occurrence.

On the 28th we went to the Forêt Niol. We first crossed over the low ridge at the foot of the Trois Frères, descended towards Anse Nord-Ouest, and, turning to the left, went up

the side of the mountain, through tall grass which almost reached to the top of our heads, ascending several very steep places, until we were about 1000 feet above the sea. Here we found pine-apples growing in abundance; these our men peeled, and, holding them by the crown, gnawed them as an English countryman would a turnip. Bushels upon bushels might have been gathered in a very few minutes: nothing but the rats appears to contend with man for them; and as the pines are probably more numerous than the rats, there are plenty left for men's use. Going up, hardly a bird was seen save the "Goelands" flying round the badamiers below, and a few "Colibris" and "Martins." It is curious that on the island of Mahé there does not appear at present to be existing a single indigenous species of the large family of *Fringillidæ* or *Ploceidæ*. There are grasses enough, one would have thought, to maintain a good many grain-eaters, but their seeds remain undevoured by any bird. We soon crossed over a narrow ridge, and on descending we discovered a small flock of what I at once saw would turn out to be a new species of *Zosterops*. Contrary, however, to the usual habit of the genus, these were, as the Creoles say, "beaucoup farouches," and, keeping in a low bush with thick foliage, I had an ineffectual shot, and they flew away. At the same place we came across some "Merles." I had heard of the existence of this species, and, now that I got it, I felt pretty sure, from the yellow tinge on the breast and the much larger beak, it was distinct from the Mauritius, Réunion, and Madagascar forms of the genus with which I was acquainted; and a comparison with numerous specimens of these convinced me I was right. I have described it under the name of *Hypsipetes crassirostris**. Going a little further up the mountain, we

* *HYPSSIPETES CRASSIROSTRIS*: vulgo "Merle."

Hypsipetes H. olivaceo admodum similis sed rostro valde robustiore, gula, pectore abdomineque flavescens.

Descr. maris adulti.—Supra fuscus, nonnihil ad olivaceum vergens, pileo nigro; subtus gula pectoreque cinereis flavo tinctis, abdomine albido-flavescente; remigibus rectricibusque fuscis, quibusdam secundariis externe rufis; rostro sordide aurantiaco; pedibus fusco-flavis, unguibus nigris, iridibus fusco-rubris.

Long. tota 10·75, alæ 5·3, caudæ 4·5, acrotarsi 1·05, dig. med. sine ungue 0·8, hallucis sine ungue 0·5, maxillæ a fronte 1·1, ejusdem a rictu

passed through a grove of clove-trees, evidently planted by the hand of man, as this tree is not indigenous in Seychelles; and a little further on we entered the forest. There were few large trees, the forest having been destroyed, I am informed, by a fire which raged over this part of the island about ten years ago. The old "capucins" were all dead, their white stems only remaining; the tree-ferns, of only one species, were of no great height; neither were the two species of palms; and there was nothing very striking in the general appearance of the bush, which can hardly be dignified by the name of forest. The only birds to be seen or heard were a few "Merles" and "Paille-en-queues" (*Phacton flavirostris*) soaring overhead. In going up I had observed one of the latter enter a hole in the stump of a dead capucin, about a quarter of a mile off, and on returning I made for it. After a scramble over dead wood and granite boulders, I got to it. The hole was about fifteen feet from the ground, and my man soon ascended, not, however, without fears on my part that the rotten old stem would come down with his weight. Unfortunately there was only a young bird inside it; this I took home and endeavoured to rear, but it only lived four days. I afterwards saw several "Pigeons hollandais" (*Erythræna pulcherrima*), and shot one.

The next morning I went up the side of the mountain directly at the back of the town to the height of about 500 feet, and on a sort of plateau I fell in again with a flock of the *Zosterops*. They were tolerably plentiful in a grove of clove-trees, incessantly in motion, following one another from tree to tree as restless as Titmice. Their only note was a sharp one; and though, from their appearance on dissection, they would soon have bred, they did not sing. This species also proved to be new, and I have described it under the name of *Z. modesta** from its very

1·25, mandibulæ ab articulo 1·81; rostri altitudo ad frontem 0·41 poll. Angl.

Descr. fœminæ adultæ.—Mâris similis sed minor, secundariis omnino fuscis, et rectricibus albo terminatis; rostro vivide aurantiaco; pedibus flavis. *Juniôris (masc.?)* rostrum fuscum, pedes brunneo-flavi sunt.

* ZOSTEROPS MODESTA.

Z. obscure fusco-grisea, annulo periophthalmico niveo, loris nigris.

Descr. mâris adulti.—Supra olivaceo-grisea, subtus fusco-murina; hypo-

plain appearance. This morning, too, close by the same place, I saw a male *Foudia madagascariensis*, evidently introduced; I saw this species afterwards near the same place. My Creole servant, who was with me, did not know either of these birds, but thought that the *Zosterops* was a female "Colibri," and the "Cardinal" he had never seen before. I also shot a young *Turtur picturatus*, and saw another one. This bird is called "Pigeon" or "Tourterelle rouge," and was introduced, it is said, some few years ago by a late Inspector of Police. It is not very common, and I saw it nowhere else. On my return by the sea-shore, I saw a Greenshank (*Totanus glottis*) and a Sand-piper (*Actitis hypoleucis*).

On the 31st I got a specimen of the large "Corbijeu," which does not appear to me to differ from the ordinary *Numenius arcuatus*. These birds are generally very wild and difficult to approach, and require a gun-cartridge to bring them down. They are not nearly so common as their congener *N. phaeopus*.

The weather for the next few days was bad, with heavy squalls of wind, as is common during this monsoon; and we were out but little. I got some more specimens of *Zosterops modesta*, and was surprised to find that the males were sometimes smaller than the females. I had not observed this peculiarity in others of the genus.

On one of these evenings, when the weather was finer, I went out in the bay, with Mr. Ward, to spear fish by torchlight; this amusement, when fish are abundant, I have no doubt is a most exciting one. The mode of operation is to go in a large canoe, the spearsmen sitting in the bow, each armed with various sorts of harpoons or fish-spears; amidships two men stand up, holding aloft dead branches of cocoanut-trees lighted, these are renewed as they are burnt out, to the great detriment of the hats, clothes, and whiskers of the expectant fishermen, a shower

chondriis brunneo tinctis, annulo periophthalmico niveo, loris nigris; remigibus reetricibusque fuscis, illis externe griseo limbatis, et interne albido marginatis; rostro griseo; pedibus obscure plumbeis.

Long. tota circa 4·8, alæ 2·3, acrotarsi 0·72, dig. med. sine ungue 0·46, hallucis sine ungue 0·3, maxillæ a fronte 0·41, ejusdem a rictu 0·58, mandibulæ ab articulo 0·95 poll. Angl.

Fœmina mari omnino similis.

of sparks falling on to them during the whole operation if the men are unskilful. A third man, in the stern, quietly pushes the canoe along with a pole. The sport was not very diverting to me the night we were out, as, with the exception of small needle-fish, a foot long, I did not see anything to strike at, and not a fish was caught, as the sea was not sufficiently calm; at the same time the light of the torches reflected on the coral only some two or three feet beneath the surface (as you always fish in very shallow water) was beautiful, having the appearance of a very rough snow-field, and I have no doubt that if there had been no ripple the effect would have been still more striking.

The weather on the 5th February having improved, and the wind being steady from the north-west, we determined to make a start for Praslin and Curieuse, where the double cocoa-nut (*Lodoicea sechellarum*)* grows, and the islands in their neighbourhood. Dr. Brooks, the Government Medical Officer, kindly lent us his boat, a large one of about seven tons and yawl-rigged, in which we left Mahé at 10 o'clock in the morning of the 6th, and at 4 in the afternoon ran on to the beach of Anse Marie-Louise, at the east end of Praslin, where we were most hospitably received by Mr. Campbell, an ex-whaler, and his wife, a Creole of Ladigue, at his house, situated in a luxuriant grove of common cocoa-nut. The distance from Mahé to Praslin is about twenty-five miles, and we fetched the south-east point of the island in one tack. I did not see many birds but the common *Haliplana panayensis*, Shearwaters, Tropic-birds, and a few Boobies.

Praslin is about seven and a half miles long by three wide in its broadest part, having an interrupted belt of marsh along the coast of from fifty to a hundred yards wide, usually covered with *Hibiscus* and other plants; and then the land rises immediately, forming a continuous chain of hills from 1000 to 1500 feet in height throughout its length. It is not nearly so rocky as any of the other islands I visited. The coast is almost entirely fringed with groves of cocoa-nuts growing between the sea and the marshes. The hills are not thickly wooded, the "Cèdre"

* An interesting account of this curious palm is given by Mr. Swinburne Ward in the Journal of the Linnean Society, (Botany) vol. viii. pp. 135-139.

(*Casuarinus*) and the double cocoa-nut being perhaps the commonest, and there is but little undergrowth. The former is usually of no great age, the island being so frequently devastated by fire, but occasionally on the beach very large ones may be seen. One I saw, which had been uprooted by the hurricane of 1862, must have been over 100 feet in height, and at 12 feet from the ground its diameter over 7 feet, and with a clear run, without a branch, of 50 feet. The double cocoa-nut is still plentiful in some parts, particularly on the south-east end of the island, the windward side. On the north-east, it has been almost extirpated, this being the lee side during the south-east monsoon, when the fires chiefly rage. The male tree frequently grows to 100 feet in height, the female to 60 or 70. We had heard so much of their beauty that I confess to disappointment. On every adult tree four or five dead yellow leaves hang down against the trunk; and the living leaves standing up much straighter than is usual with palms, the former are exposed to plain view. The trees, too, seldom grow sufficiently near one another to afford mutual protection, and the ends of the leaves are always much withered and split by the wind. These causes give the tree a ragged and untidy appearance; and it will not bear comparison in beauty with the graceful cocoa-nut or with many species of the lofty cabbage-palm.

My first inquiries of Mr. Campbell were for the "Pie chanteuse;" he told me that a few years ago one was constantly about his house, but that it had been killed by one of his cats, and he had not seen one since in that part of the island. He said the bird was gradually getting scarcer and scarcer, owing to the ravages of the wild and tame cats, but that there were still a few to be found on both coasts, about the middle of the island.

After our arrival we took a short stroll up the hills to the east of Mr. Campbell's house, to look at the double cocoa-nuts. We saw but few species of birds. The "Merle" (*Hypsipetes crassirostris*) was very numerous; two or three "Mangeurs des poules" were chasing one another round a dead cèdre; an occasional "Tourterelle" flew from the ground as we walked, and one or two "Colibris" flew past our path, and we heard "Cateaux

noirs" whistling far away. We were astonished to see several large flying foxes (*Pteropus*), though it wanted an hour to sunset, sailing over head to a grove of mangoes below. These beasts are quite diurnal, and evidently can see perfectly in daylight, as it is very rarely that they will then approach within gunshot. At night, however, they will fly within a few feet of a man's head, and many are killed with long poles as they fly round the fruit-trees.

The following morning we went along the coast on the north-east of the island, and in a swamp came upon a small colony of "Veuves," where I succeeded in shooting three males in full plumage. I only saw one brown-coloured example, but did not get a shot at it. They are the most pugnacious birds I ever saw, constantly chasing one another and fighting. These also prove to belong to a new species, which I have described as *corvina** (Plate IV.). We were disappointed in not seeing more birds.

In the afternoon I went over the hill to the westward, and near a piece of maize, then ripe, I saw several "Cateaux noirs," and the "Pigeon hollandais." The Parrots were too cunning to give me a fair shot, and they kept sitting above a hundred yards off on the tops of the "cèdres," enjoying the evening sun and whistling pleasantly. I waited till sundown, but it was of no avail; they were not very hungry and did not care to risk coming down to eat. The next morning we crossed over the same place, and I shot two males and a female, all in the most wretched plumage, just moulting, so that their feathers came off on merely handling them; I might have shot some more, but all that I saw were in the same ragged state. We then descended to the sea and walked along the shore for some two miles, sometimes for a

* TCHITREA CORVINA.

T. major: *mas adultus* omnino chalybeo-niger, mediis rectricibus longissimis.

Fœmina et mas juvenis capite chalybeo-nigro; corpore supra castaneo, subtus albo; remigibus fuscis, externe castaneo limbatis.

Descr. maris vestitu nuptiali.—Unicolor, chalybeo-niger ut *Corvus*, rostro pedibusque nigris.

Long. tota (rectricibus mediis exceptis) circa 8·75, alæ 3·45, caudæ 11·5 (!), acrotarsi 0·75, dig. med. sine ungue 0·5, hallucis sine ungue 3·5, maxillæ a fronte 0·53, ejusdem a rictu 0·99, mandibulæ ab articulo 1·35 poll. Angl.

quarter of a mile up to our middle in the sea to avoid the rocks which jut out below high water. Besides sea-birds nothing particular was to be seen; and about 11 o'clock, having shot three Whimbrels, we stopped for breakfast, as we found a fisherman's hut whence our men could borrow pots and pans. One of the men returning from foraging told me he had heard a "Pie" about half a mile further on; and after breakfast we again started, proceeding to the Protestant church and school, where an intelligent youth told me, in fair French, that the "Pie" was not uncommon at this spot in the early morning and in the afternoon, but that they did not sing or show themselves during the middle of the day. We went on about a quarter of a mile further to where there was a splendid grove of cocoa-nuts, one or two very fine badamiers, and a few cèdres; and there we stayed till it was time to return home, without hearing or seeing a single "Pie." When about halfway back, however, I heard a very plaintive whistle, and my man at once exclaimed "Pie, Pie!" and I soon saw the bird hopping about in a large badamier, where I shot it. It proved to be a male, and some people living near said there was also a female about; but we did not see her. We got to Mr. Campbell's after dark, and had some little trouble to scramble down the steep side of the hill at the back of his house in the dusky light.

On the 10th February we started early, and walked some three miles till we were nearly opposite to Curieuse, a small island situated about a mile from the coast of Praslin. On our way we passed the place where I had before shot the "Veuves;" and I killed one in brown plumage, which, on dissection, proved to be a male. I also saw a "Pie," which I missed.

Formerly all the lepers from Mauritius and its dependencies were sent to Curieuse; but of late years the practice has been discontinued, and now there were only three of these unfortunates and a few old decrepit paupers from Mahé and the other islands. These people are under the care of Mr. George Forbes, who has resided there for many years. We reached the island in a pirogue, which was rowed by our own men, the narrow strait which divides it from Praslin being only a mile wide. At the present time there are very few double cocoa-nuts left, but the

old hard "bowls"* in which the trees stood are plentiful nearly all over the island. I was told by Mr. Forbes that the "Pie chanteuse" never visited his island, and that very few land-birds were ever found there. About eighteen months ago, three Flamingoes, probably *Phænicopterus minor*, appeared. They were apparently young birds, and being very tame they were killed by the fishermen and eaten.

I saw a pair of *Dromas ardeola*, called there "Cavalier," and killed one. In their habits, as far as I saw, they were as unlike a Tern as they possibly could be; and the sternum of the one I shot shows no more affinity to that genus than that of any other Plover does. I consequently cannot agree with Messrs. Blyth and Layard and Professor Schlegel in classing it with the Terns. I was told by Mr. Forbes that the species was not uncommon, but that seldom more than two or three were observed together. The other birds I saw on the island were *Nectarinia dussumieri*, *Tinnunculus gracilis*, *Strepsilas interpres*, *Totanus glottis*, and *Ardea atricapilla*.

Returning across the strait, a heavy squall suddenly came down from Praslin, with sheets of rain and very violent gusts of wind, which raised a considerable sea before we landed at Praslin. On walking back through a young cocoa-nut grove, with the trees about twelve or fifteen feet high, some Whimbrels afforded very pretty shooting, and I got three of them. I often observed them perched on the topmost branches of dead cèdres.

On the 11th we started for the islands of Félicité and Marianne, where we were told we should find an abundance of birds. We first stopped at Ladigue, about two miles and a half distant, where I wished to see the owner of Marianne; and I very much regretted that I had not time to make a longer visit, as I feel sure, from the well-wooded appearance of this beautiful island, several species must be found there. I saw one "Pie;" and I was told they were not uncommon there, but that rats and cats abound.

At about half-past ten A.M. we landed at Félicité. This small rock is the property of the Mauritius Government; and a great part of the timber used in the public works in Seychelles

* *Vide* Mr. Ward's paper already mentioned.

is brought thence. The only inhabitants are the guardian (a Creole Indian of Mauritius) and his wife, and three or four men whom he employs in the cultivation of maize and rice. With a very considerable forest on the south-west side, one would naturally suppose animal life would be abundant; but I walked nearly round the island immediately on my arrival, and the only land-birds I saw or heard were the Colibris and some "Poules marronnes," the domestic fowls which have run wild and bred in some numbers all over the island. On the top of the island, which may be perhaps 1000 feet high, there are said to be some Arabic inscriptions. Though I visited this spot I did not discover them. In the afternoon a sudden squall with thunder and lightning raised a heavy surf on Marianne, and our boatman declined risking his boat in it; so there was nothing left but to sleep at Félicité—a great waste of time, as neither of us had a single thing to do in the evening.

The next morning as soon as our boat was launched and laden, we sailed for Marianne, ran easily through the pass in the reef, and landed about a quarter past eight. Marianne is only about a mile and a half in length by half a mile in breadth, and its height, I should judge, not more than 400 or 500 feet. On the north side it is tolerably wooded, but, I should imagine, not with any very large trees; altogether from the sea it looked but a poor place for a naturalist. On landing, however, our ideas were soon changed: as many notes of birds were to be heard as on a fine May day in the eastern counties of England. On walking up to the guardian's house, situated about one hundred yards from the landing-place, in a clump of badamier and tamarind trees, I saw several "Pies," and in twenty minutes I had got as many birds as would occupy me best part of the day in skinning them.

The "Pie chanteuse" is the boldest and most familiar bird I ever saw. It will approach within a few feet, and when sitting on a branch of a tree will allow itself to be knocked down with a stick as one was while I was there, by a man whom we brought with us. They are also said to enter houses.

They feed on the ground as well as among bushes and trees. The gizzards of those I skinned contained remains of small mille-

pedes and beetles, and in one a small lizard ; so that it will not be the want of food which will exterminate these birds. In habits they reminded me of a Stonechat or a Redstart, constantly jerking their tails and sitting with them erected and wings drooping. There is no apparent difference in the sexes ; one bird I obtained, which was evidently young, had some slight reddish-brown markings on the white upper wing-coverts. The note of the bird (I suppose of the male) is exceedingly pleasant ; but it cannot, so far as my experience went, be called a song, being only a succession of low soft notes, something between the low notes of a Redbreast and the soft ones of the Common Linnet.

These soft notes are chiefly heard in the morning and evening. They commenced even before daybreak, when the moon and stars were shining, every tree seeming to contain one bird or more.

On one of the rafters in the house in which we slept, I was shown a nest, which I was assured a "Pie" had built some few months ago, but had deserted. The bird had gained entrance to the house through a hole in a plank of the wall. The nest was a great straggling heap of dead skeleton leaves some seven or eight inches in diameter, but I could not make out what its shape was when complete. I was told they also bred in crannies in rocks. From their appearance I should imagine their breeding-season would not occur for some months.

The young birds are often taken from the nests, but are seldom reared, and when reared still more seldom live for any length of time. The type example (Ibis, 1865, p. 331), which lived for some two or three months in the aviary of Lady Barkly at Mauritius, apparently died from a disease of the lungs, the temperate climate of Réduit, 800 feet above the sea, probably being too cold for it.

The next bird which claimed my attention was the "Mangeur du riz." I had heard of this species before, and expected to find it a hard-billed bird. It proved to be new, and I have described it as *Foudia sechellarum**. All the examples I saw (and I

* FODIA SEHELLARUM.

F. fusco-brunnea, fronte, occipite et mento aureo tinctis (vestitu hiemali).

must have seen between fifty and a hundred) were in the same dull plumage. I have but little doubt that the male in breeding-plumage would assume a yellow dress. In habits these birds are gregarious, and, I should imagine, live chiefly on grass-seeds; they are said also, as their name implies, to eat rice. The proprietor of Marianne told me the species was also found at Ladigue, but was not plentiful there. I also shot some "Colibris," which I at the time thought, as stated before, were of a different species from those in the other islands.

While I was skinning these birds Mr. Nevill went out with my gun, and returned shortly with examples of the "Tourterelle rouge," "Pigeon hollandais," and "Serin." The "Tourterelle rouge" I was pleased to find was not, as I had been led to expect, *Turtur picturatus*, its larger bill and broader white bar on the under surface of the tail showing it to be a different species; and I had hoped it would be new, but I subsequently found it to be the *T. rostratus* of Bonaparte (Consp. Av. ii. p. 62). The woodcuts of the head and wing of this bird, and of those of *T. picturatus*, will show the great difference between the two, and it is interesting to see the shortened wing of the island form.

The "Serin" proved to be a second new species of *Zosterops*, which I have called *Z. semiflava**. Mr. Nevill saw a flock of

Descr. maris adulti vestitu hiemali.—Supra fusco-brunnea, fronte occipiteque aureo tinctis, nucha olivacente; capitis lateribus olivaceis; subtus pallidior, mento et gula flavescens; remigibus rectricibusque fuscis olivaceo limbatis; rostro nigro; pedibus fuscis.

Mas juvenis vel fœmina aureo caret colore in fronte et mento, aliter colores vividiores præsertim in remigum marginibus habet; rostro pedibusque hepaticis.

Long. tota circa 4.9, alæ 2.95, caudæ 2.1, acrotarsi 0.85, dig. med. sine ungue 0.52, hallucis sine ungue 0.41, maxillæ a fronte 0.67, mandibulæ ab articulo 0.98 poll. Angl.

* *ZOSTEROPS SEMIFLAVA.*

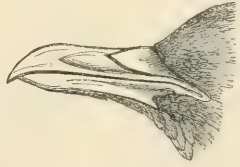
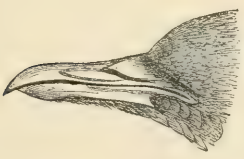
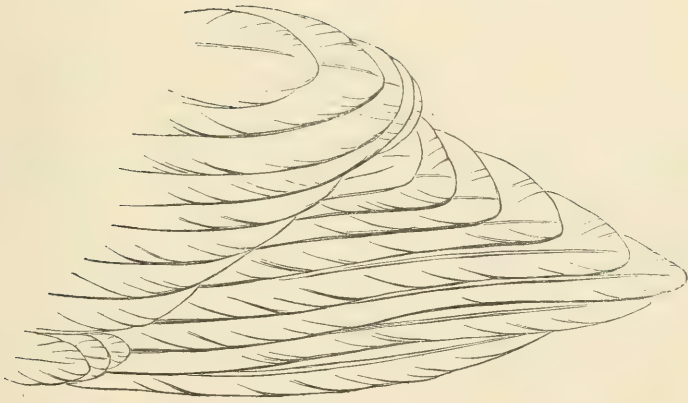
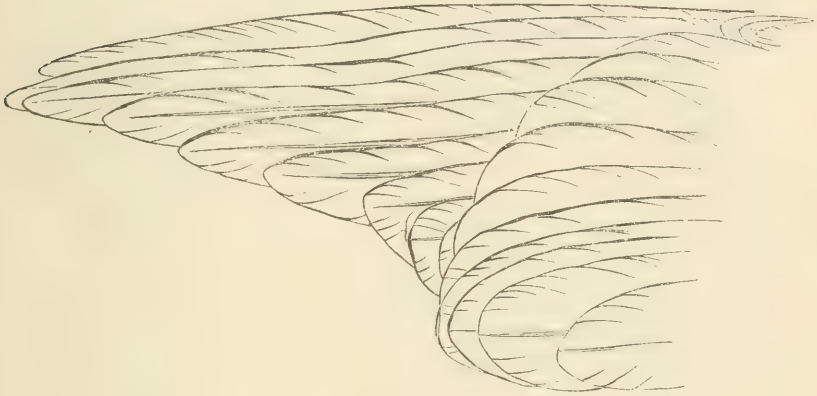
Zosterops Z. polioastræ (Heuglin, Ibis, 1861, p. 357, pl. xlii.) simillima, sed epigastro abdomineque omnino flavis, et hypochondriis badiis.

Descr. maris adulti.—Supra flavo-olivacea, uropygio flavo; subtus flava, hypochondriis badiis; annulo periophthalmico niveo; remigibus rectricibusque atro-fuscis, illis externe flavo limbatis et interne albido late marginatis; rostro pedibusque plumbeis.

Long. tota circa 4.3, alæ 2.28, caudæ 1.85, acrotarsi 0.75, dig. med. sine ungue 0.39, hallucis sine ungue 0.3, maxillæ a fronte 0.47, ejusdem a rictu 0.64, mandibulæ ab articulo 0.92 poll. Angl.

Fœmina mari similis.

some dozen or so, from which he killed a couple. I was too busy to go out again on this day, and so I did not see the



species alive. I was told that this bird was also found at La-digue, Praslin, and Silhouette. I am pretty certain I saw it once at Mahé, but did not succeed in getting a shot at it.

The "Pigeon hollandais" of Marianne was of course *Erythræna pulcherrima*. The "Merle" and "Mangeur des Poules" appeared to be identical with the Mahé species. I was told that the "Cateau noir" was formerly numerous, but that it had been exterminated on account of its depredations on the maize-crops.

The next morning I took a short walk to try and get some more *Zosterops*, but I could not find one; the only bird I did get was a young "Tourterelle rouge." Unfortunately I had no more dust-shot with me; and though I should have much liked to have obtained some more birds, it was impossible; and we left Marianne. After a tedious voyage, for we had to beat all the way against a chopping sea, we reached Praslin soon after noon.

The information I had received as to there being no cats or rats at Marianne was confirmed by the proprietor, M. Choppy, and by the guardian, who had resided there for about three years; and it is only to their absence that I can ascribe the great abundance of bird-life on this little island, and to their presence the entire destitution of bird-life at Félicité, which, to all appearance, would afford more food than its sister island Marianne, situated not two miles distant. Long, then, may the latter be catless and ratless! M. Choppy, to his honour be it said, has forbidden a single one of the former animals to be introduced by any of his people; and it is to be hoped that his orders may be obeyed. If, however, the whole of the island is cleared for the purpose of planting cocoa-nut trees, as is the intention of M. Choppy, I fear their introduction will be almost as destructive to the birds as the introduction of cats and rats. We saw a large species of lizard which was extremely common at Marianne; and we obtained several, which I left behind with Mr. Nevill. We also saw it at Praslin. I may mention that the human population of Marianne consists of one family of five or six persons.

Having at last procured a female "Veuve" at Praslin, at the same spot where I had procured the others, and seen that a nest of the species I previously found was still without eggs, we left on the afternoon of the 14th, and had a pleasant run in the whaler over to Mahé, where we arrived late in the evening.

Being anxious to visit Silhouette, we were lucky in finding

M. Baillon, the manager of the cocoa-nut plantation there, then at Mahé; and, by appointment, we met him on the morning of the 17th at Anse Nord-Ouest, where he had two whale-boats in readiness, and at about 8 o'clock we embarked. As the wind was dead ahead, there was nothing for it but to pull the whole way; and right well did our two crews pull for four hours and a half against a head-sea and strong breeze and current, only stopping to rest once for about five minutes. The distance is over twelve miles.

Silhouette is one large mass of granite rising very abruptly from the sea to the height, I should judge, of over 2000 feet. In many places there are acres of bare rock; in others there is sufficient soil for forest, which is being gradually cut away for the introduction of cocoa-nut trees. The cocoa-nuts are now planted more than halfway up the mountain, and it is probable that in ten years none of the native forest will remain. The produce last year exceeded £6000 in value, and will shortly be doubled. The whole island is the property of one person.

We remained at Silhouette a couple of days, most comfortably entertained by M. and Mme. Baillon; and here we saw the "Cateau vert" at the edge of the forest, in a place some 600 or 700 feet high, where was a patch of maize; but they had been so often fired at that they would not come within shot. I saw also a few "Mangeurs des poules," "Colibris," "Pigeons hollandais," but could not see a single "Serin;" and, indeed, M. Baillon assured me it did not exist there.

The "Tourterelle" and "Martin" have been introduced; the latter, I was told, about twenty years ago, and it is now very common.

With the exception of a narrow belt of sand along the coast, now planted with luxuriant cocoa-nuts, the island of Silhouette is the most difficult place to get about I ever was at. The sides of the mountain, when they are not solid masses of rock, are strewn with enormous blocks from six to thirty feet square, over or round which you have to make your way, very often over them; so that a few hundred yards in a straight direction may take almost as many minutes to accomplish, and I have no wish ever to attempt another walk up the mountain.

In the evenings, there being a bright moon, we saw many flying foxes round some trees close to M. Baillon's house. I also saw them sailing about several times during the hottest part of the day. We were told that a species of snake was very common here, but we failed to get it.

On the 19th we returned to Mahé and remained for the night at the house of M. Leflecher, near Cape Ternay, where I again had the opportunity of enjoying the excellent hospitality of the Seychellois. At this place we were told that snakes were not uncommon. The next morning we walked up an exceedingly pretty valley at the foot of the Morne Blanc and across the ridge about 1800 feet, and descended to the eastward of Port Victoria, which we reached the same evening.

The next few days I spent in packing up, as the steamer was due on the 23rd. I got, however, three live "Poules d'eau" from Denis Island, some seventy miles to the northward, which, after various vicissitudes, safely reached the Zoological Gardens, and appear to be our common *Gallinula chloropus*.

In the early morning of the 24th the mail came in, and before sunrise I was on my way to Aden.

In concluding this paper, I must offer my warmest thanks to Mr. Swinburne Ward for his hospitality and his information on various subjects of natural history, and to Mr. Gould, Mr. George Gray, and Mr. Sclater for their assistance in helping me to determine the several species I brought home with me. I trust that Dr. Wright, now on a visit to the archipelago, will not only be successful in his own particular line of natural history, but will also contribute some further information on their ornithology, as I feel no doubt that other species of birds remain to be discovered, many parts of Mahé and Ladigue not having been worked by me at all, and the sea-birds having been almost entirely neglected.

In the subjoined List of Seychelles birds, a "¶" is prefixed to the names of those species which I have every reason to believe are peculiar to the islands, and a "‡" to the names of those which have been introduced.

- ¶ *Tinnunculus gracilis* (Lesson).
"Mangeur des poules."
- ¶ *Falco an Circus*? "Papangue"
(said to occur in bad weather).
- ¶ *Coracopsis barklyi*, *nobis*. "Cateau noir."
- ¶ *Palæornis wardi*, *nobis*. "Cateau vert."
Collocalia francica (Gm.)? "Hirondelle."
- ¶ *Nectarinia dussumieri*, *Hartl*.
"Colibri."
- ¶ *Zosterops modesta*, *nobis*.
- ¶ — *semiflava*, *nobis*. "Serin."
- ¶ *Tchitrea corvina*, *nobis*. "Veuve."
- ¶ *Copsychus sechellarum*, *A. Newton*. "Pie chanteuse."
- ¶ *Hypsipetes crassirostris*, *nobis*.
"Merle."
- ¶ *Foudia sechellarum*, *nobis*. "Mangeur du riz."
‡ — *madagascariensis* (L.).
- ‡ *Acridotheres tristis* (L.). "Martin."
- ¶ *Erythroœna pulcherrima*. "Pigeon hollandais."
- ¶ *Turtur rostratus*, *Bp.* "Tourterelle rouge."
‡ — *picturatus* (Timm.).
- ‡ *Geopelia striata* (L.). "Tourterelle."
- ‡ *Francolinus an Coturnix*?

- ¶ *Ægialites geoffroyi* (Wagl.).
- ¶ *Squatarola helvetica* (L.).
- ¶ *Streptilas interpres* (L.).
- ¶ *Dromas ardeola*, *Payk.* "Cavallier."
- ¶ *Numenius arcuatus* (L.). "Corbijeun."
— *phœopus* (L.). "Corbijeu."
- ¶ *Totanus glottis* (L.).
- ¶ *Actitis hypoleuca* (L.). "Alouette."
- ¶ *Tringa minuta*, *Leisl.*
- ¶ *Ardea atricapilla*, *Afzel.* "Gasse."
- ¶ *Ardeola lepida* (Horsf.). "Manik."
- ¶ *Gallinula chloropus* (L.)? "Poule d'eau."
- ¶ *Phœnicopterus minor*?
- ¶ *Anas an Dendrocygna*? (in bad weather).
- ¶ *Puffinus chlororhynchus*, *Less.*?
"Fouquet."
— *obscurus* (Gm.)? "Fouquet."
- ¶ *Sterna velox*, *Rüpp.*?
- ¶ *Sternula* —?
- ¶ *Haliplana panayensis* (Gm.).
- ¶ *Anous* —?
- ¶ *Phaeton flavirostris*, *Brandt.*
- ¶ *Tachypetes* —?
- ¶ *Sula* —? "Fou."
— —? "Capucin."

The following table shows the distribution of the peculiar species among the principal islands of the group:—

	Mahé.	Silhouette.	Praslin.	Curieuse.	Aride.	Ladigue.	Félicité.	Marianne.
<i>Tinnunculus gracilis</i> . . . . .	.v**	.v**	*	*	...	...	...	*
<i>Coracopsis barklyi</i> . . . . .	.v**	.v**	.v**	*	...	...	...	*
<i>Palæornis wardi</i>	*	*	.v**	*	...	...	...	*
<i>Nectarinia dussumieri</i>	*	*	*	*	...	*	*	*
<i>Zosterops modesta</i> . . . . .	.v**	.v**	.v	...	...	.v	...	*
— <i>semiflava</i> . . . . .	.v**	...	.v	...	...	.v	...	*
<i>Tchitrea corvina</i> . . . . .	.v	...	*	...	.v	*	.v	*
<i>Copsychus sechellarum</i> . . . . .	.v	...	*	...	.v	*	.v	*
<i>Hypsipetes crassirostris</i> . . . . .	*	*	*	...	...	*	*	*
<i>Foudia sechellarum</i> . . . . .	*	*	*	...	...	.v	...	*
<i>Erythroœna pulcherrima</i> . . . . .	*	*	*	...	...	...	...	*
<i>Turtur rostratus</i> . . . . .	*	*	*	...	...	...	...	*

Of the genera to which these peculiar species belong, one, *Tinnunculus*, is cosmopolitan, and a second, *Turtur*, widely distributed in the Old World. Four, *Palæornis*, *Nectarinia*, *Zosterops*, and *Tchitrea*, are well represented on the African and Indian continents, not to go further, as well as in the Mascarene Islands or Madagascar. *Copsychus* and *Hypsipetes* occur in India and Madagascar, but not in Africa. *Foudia* is found in Africa, Madagascar, and the Mascarene Islands, but not in India, while *Coracopsis* is a genus hitherto thought to be confined to Madagascar and the Comoros. *Erythræna* is the only form peculiar to the Seychelles; but I am much inclined to doubt its claim to generic rank, though not to the extent of Prof. Schlegel (N. T. D. iii. p. 88), who would refer it to *Ptilopus*; and I should place its only representative with *Columba madagascariensis*, Linn., and *C. nitidissima*, Scop., in the genus *Alectrænas*, which Mr. G. R. Gray established to receive the last-named species. In this aspect, then, *Alectrænas* will range with *Coracopsis*.

These few remarks will serve to show the natural affinities of the Ornis of the Seychelles. Its Malagash tendency is evident; for it contains, so far as known, no good genus which is not also found either in Madagascar or the Mascarene Islands. But I forbear from entering into any speculations as to its derivation, in confidence that future investigators will throw more light on this interesting subject.

XX.—On the Ornithology of Palestine.

Part VI.

By the Rev. H. B. TRISTRAM, M.A., F.L.S., C.M.Z.S.

(Plate VII.)

(Continued from p. 97.)

THE family of the *Muscicapidæ* is barely represented in Palestine, scantily in species, and no less sparsely in individuals. Even the well-known East-European species, *Muscicapa collaris*, Bechs., and *Erythrosterna parva* (Bechs.), escaped our notice,