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NOTES ON THE NESTING OF THE STORM PETREL.

By the Rev. HUBERT D. ASTLEY, F.Z.S.

As we steamed in a trim little launch on the waves of the road Atlantic amongst a group of islands whose whereabouts ay perhaps be guessed, but not stated positively, the blueness nd brilliancy of a June sky were overhead; the Cormorants and



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ags were fishing on either side of us; the water, when one oked down into its depths, was clear as crystal, and the brown nd orange sea-plants could be seen waving long graceful tresses, which numerous anemones were anchored with mauve and en tentacles: the flowers of the ocean.

Now and then the forests under the waves were skirted by ad stretches of sand, protruding from which one caught mpses of other species of anemones, preferring in the order their nature to fasten themselves more firmly, pushing their

tentacles above the surface of the fou tion of the rock and stones to which they are fixed, so t only their disks c marbled pink and brown and grey led like blossomin bulbs the smoothness of the glisten nd, where here an there walks with solemn side-gai il-looking crab wit outstretched pincers. A separate w ne would think, a worl from which on calm summer days the eil seems to be lifted i part, a world of which it may be said one sees as it were throug a glass, and that darkly for the most part, only filling us with th desire to see and to know more, a place where fishes dart an gleam, where a myriad creatures of the ocean expand and throw up feelers and tentacles and feathery crowns painted with myriad hues, where shells are twisted as fanciful trumpets an horns, scalloped and fluted and ribbed and coloured—suc colours! palest rose-leaf pink, saffron yellow, deep iridescen blues and mother-of-pearl.

On, over all these mysterious depths we steam, rolling an tossing as we meet the incoming tide and leave the shelter c the shore. We are now where the waves are travelling on meeting the swell of the great Atlantic, and the face of th waters behind us can vie with the colours of the Mediterranea so vivid is it in stretches of blue and purple and green.

Ahead of us lies a group of islands, one of which is lo and low in shape, except for the extreme western end, where t rocks are broken up into giant haycocks, against which, even the calmest days, the spray and the surf are ever dashing a breaking.

To-day there is from the distance but little white foam be seen, which assures us that our landing will be effected, the sailors know by the amount of swell what our success mi be.

The island in question is the home in the nesting-sea of thousands of Puffins and Manx-Shearwaters. The Les Black-backed Gulls are there too: a large colony! besides sprinkling of Oyster-catchers, Ringed Plovers, Terns, an Herring Gulls.

Now the Puffins begin to show themselves; first two or thre almost under the stern of the launch, as she hurries to ou destination.

Quaintest of quaint little birds (I am sure they live to age of Methuzelah!); one popping with a neat header under waves, which sets us on the look-out to see where he will "h up serenely from below;" two or three others pattering alo the surface, so close that each wave as they flutter along catch

their breasts, and stops their hurry-scurry, until they settle on the surface of the water again, looking round at us with quickly-turning heads and paddling feet—One might believe them at those moments to be automatic toys.

There are some more, six or seven, and more again, and now several fly past with their small quickly-beating wings, one overhead having three or four sand-eels in his brilliant parrot bill; he is on his way to his fluffy soot-coloured baby which is sitting in the burrow under the thrift tufts, squeaking with hunger.

But enough about our dear quaint friends the "Puffs," as we call them, for more about them another day. It is true we were going on purpose to pay them a visit, but our attention has been distracted. For to-day the Puffins are left to themselves, and can come and go without our paying them over-much attention.

Anchoring the launch at a trustworthy distance from a shore which, above high water mark and below it, is all rocks and boulders, we have jumped into the boat which we towed in our wake, and rowing to an inlet, have landed in safety, carrying our luncheon with us.

The atmosphere of the island is as an oven compared with the breeze on the sea, and the odour of sea-birds is apparent. No wonder, for they are everywhere! In earth and on it, in air and water. It is positively bewildering—the air is as full of birds as it is of bees when they are swarming. Under our very feet they have burrowed, and are sitting. On the rocks and thrift tufts all over the island they are standing. In the bays there are thousands floating on the water, and beneath them are more, diving in hundreds.

The whole island is fringed with rough boulders and large stones, lying upon the top of one another to a height of three or four feet from the sandy foundation, just beyond the high-tide boundary.

As we walk along, stumbling from time to time through the soft Puffin-burrowed soil, we can hear the comical notes of the Puffins themselves, a great many of which are on their eggs, not only under the soil, but also under those loose stones and rocks beneath which they have shuffled in where passages are to

there was anything besides Puffins and Razor-bills sed our minds.

We had heard of the Storm-Petrels nesting habitually under huge rocks in very inaccessible places upon a smaller island that lies more to the westward of the group we are visiting, but never on the island we are now exploring.

The Puffins and the Razor-bills give vent to uncanny grunts and groans, which sometimes sound as if their "tummies" were aching *badly*; but as I stumble over the boulders, what is that curious croaking chatter immediately beneath my feet? Now it has stopped—yes! but there is a similar sound only a yard away. It might be a frog, or a swallow, and yet not quite—something between the croak of the former and the warbling of the latter. I am on my knees in a moment, for it is a vocal sound that is new to me. There again! with my ear to an opening amongst the stones, it is distinctly just below me.

The voice of a bird! what can it be? I must remove the big stones to satisfy curiosity—curiosity stirred by keen excitement! And this lends me strength! The June sun is broiling down, its heat reflected into one's face from the stones themselves; but the mystery must be solved, and taking off my coat I bend myself to the task, removing with much exertion stones of no light weight, and striving whilst so doing to keep smaller ones, dislodged from their positions, from rolling into the hollow I am making. There again! the same frog-like chattering! What does the heat matter, the risk of a sunstroke or an apoplectic fit, which I confess seems imminent. What does a bruised nail signify, or a bleeding knuckle?

I am two feet down now, and cannot be far from the foundation. An old Puffin grunts close by me, and pops his head out with a queer squint in his right eye as he turns it up and looks at me as much as to say—"What on earth are you interfering here for? Spratts and sand-eels! blazes and turf! do leave us alone; you've already dropped four pebbles on my back, and sent a shower of sand into my left eye."—with which he pops back again, and I hear him scrimmaging off by another way: he is evidently greatly perturbed! So I proceed with my employment, and after chucking out some smaller stones as large as my head, remove one, immediately beneath which is sitting what at first sight might be a House-Martin, a bird of much the same size, sooty-black all over except for a [illegible] snow-white patch above the tail. At once I see the Storm-Petrel, and as she only shuffles two or three revealing in so doing a round white egg, minutely

red speckles, on which she is sitting, I take her in my hands to admire her beauty.

The small black bill is opened to eject with a sudden spurt some greenish oil, which action is repeated as, on loosing the bird from my grasp, she flits rapidly across the shore twisting and turning in her flight from one side to another until she reaches the ocean's surface, over which, with Swallow-like motions, she is quickly lost to view.

It was uncourteous to have disturbed her and her mate, whom I found behind a large stone not a foot from where her egg was laid, and who in his turn was lifted up in brief captivity to be granted the freedom on the briny waves for which he was struggling.

In the ordinary course of their daily life they would have sat snugly under the rocks in the semi-darkness until the sun had neared the horizon and was sinking in a splendour of golden glory, lighting up the waves as they rolled on and on in ever-widening grandeur, until with a roar they were broken one by one against massive rocks and granite boulders.

Like the Petrels, we lingered until the day was dying, before we too were launched over the waves on our homeward voyage, leaving regretfully the interests and beauties of the sea-birds' isle.

A WALK IN THE "JARDIN D'ACCLIMATATION" OF PARIS.

By O. Ernest Cresswell.

No aviculturist should lose an opportunity of seeing the Jardin d'Acclimatation of Paris. I have often been astonished to meet people who think they know Paris well, and yet have never been through these charming Gardens. Situated as they are, just within the Bois de Boulogne, and just outside the Porte Maillot, which is reached through the Arc de Triomphe by probably the most striking avenue in any European capital, they may well be taken at the beginning or end of a drive in the fashionable Bois. The real lover of birds will, like myself, hardly be satisfied with such a visit by the way, but will find much to occupy him for a long morning, if not for a long afternoon too. An omnibus from the Rue de Rivoli takes one to the Porte Maillot, whence it is but a few steps across the broad avenue to the station of the Miniature Tramway; this, at

least in my own experience, is an unique specimen of public conveyance. The gauge is very narrow, and is traversed every few minutes by little long cars drawn by pairs of really flying little ponies, some Javanese, some Javanese and Shetland crossed, for which the establishment is famed. In a few minutes one is whisked through about half-a-mile of the Bois, across several of its drives to the gates of the Jardin. Here I always descend, but the line is carried on through the Garden to various stations, so that a bad walker may see most of it with a minimum of fatigue.

The place has always had a great fascination for me. I remember it quite in childhood, and delighted then, as I delight now, in the great multitude of many species of birds, especially of aquatic birds, which are seen together. I never realized the exquisite beauty of Mandarin Ducks till I once saw here 120 together on the water. I have known the Garden in many phases of gradual progress. I had not seen it for three years till this Autumn, when I spent parts of two days in it on my way to and my return from more Southern regions. For those of our Society who do not know it, or have not visited it of late, I have jotted down these few notes.

The establishment is partially botanical. From each side of the wide entrance-road, walks radiate off to fine tropical glass houses; but we are now only concerned with the birds, so keeping to the right we pass long fern houses, and soon come to an aviary for Budgerigars. It is very shallow for its length, glazed above, and leans against a heated Monkey-house. I have before, as this year, observed that the large colony of its inmates look chilly and less sprightly than the occupants of a more open aviary, which quite confirms the opinion of many aviculturists that Budgerigars are none the better for coddling. Among them I observed two or three cock Redrump Parrakeets, in lovely condition and apparently of amiable disposition. This is interesting, for some authorities give them very bad characters as persecutors of smaller birds. I have a great favourite of the race, which I bought years ago at the Antwerp Zoo. I have never trusted him with other birds, for I must say he does not look amiably at them. Why it should be so difficult, as I have found it, to obtain hens of this breed, I cannot understand. From the Budgerigars' aviary we next come to a fine row of Pheasantries—well-arranged Summer abodes, for Pheasants like shelter, but a little too shady for Winter. I specially admired some Reeves' and Elliott's Pheasants, some handsome Firebacks *(Euplocamus vcilloti)* and above all a splendid pair of Temminck's Tragopans, as sleek and hard in

feather as they might be in their native Himalayas. In one of these Pheasant enclosures were some Australian Bronze-winged Pigeons *(Phaps chalcoptera)* which the French call Lumachelles. In feathered nature there is little more lovely than the wing of a Bronze-wing cock, especially of a Tasmanian one (for these are more brilliant, though in no other respect different from their Australian relatives) catching the rays of the sun. I have had several in my own aviaries, and they were a constant source of delight to visitors. The bird stands in one position, and the wing glances gold and green with opaline prismatic tints; he turns a few inches, and it flashes red like rubies. They want a sunny aviary, alike to do justice to their plumage and to keep them in health. I have not succeeded in keeping them more than two or three years—few so long—though I have had some bred in English aviaries. In our damp air they seem subject to consumption, though mine never appeared to suffer from even severe frost.

We come next to another aviary of Budgerigars, partially glazed over, but apparently not heated; its multitude of tenants looked happier and harder in feather than the others. Among them were two or three lovely Yellow-rumped Rosellas (*Platycercus flaveolus*).* I have sometimes wondered (and, I think, seen it suggested by others) whether this sub-variety of *Platycercus* could be the offspring of a Red-headed and a Mealy Rosella. An Australian lady who once saw my own favourite Mealy (*Platycercus palliceps*), which, alas! succumbed to sunstroke from accidental exposure, told me that she had known a single Pale-headed bird in Australia which always accompanied a flock of the commoner Red-headed.

Semi-detached from the Budgerigars' aviary is another, tenanted by Cockatiels, mostly in nice plumage, and Ring-necked Bengal Parrakeets of which I cannot say the same.

From here I digressed a minute to the left, to see who was the vocalist of the sweetest piping. I found a large double cage, well raised from the ground, but terribly exposed to wind and weather. In the first compartment were some Choughs with their bright red beaks and legs; in the second, the songster—an Australian Black and White Crow.

Next we come to a grand range of Aviaries, in a charming sunny position, and most imposing from their great height and great united length. They have only recently been completed. The two end aviaries are immense, and stand out far beyond the

* The Yellow-rumped "Parrakeet" (not "Rosella,") *P. flaveolus*, is a well recognised species in the genus *Platycercus*.—R.P.

fifteen others, with round ponds in their centres. The first is chiefly tenanted by the Ibis tribe, the roseate hues of some of which are most beautiful. Each of the fifteen smaller aviaries has two inner apartments, one below, the other above. The object, apparently, of the upper floor is to accommodate races which like to roost aloft, and to give a quiet retreat to shy birds. Certainly, this great height shows to the utmost advantage birds of elegant flight. I specially observed this in the case of some long-tailed Glossy Starlings and Blue Magpies. In one compartment were strange companions—Peacocks and Pigeons—the latter the "Triangular-spotted Pigeon" of the Cape (*Columba guineæ*) said to be there very numerous and very destructive to the crops. It is a handsome bird, blue, with maroon markings, seldom to be met with in England and then by far too dear.

In the next I coveted a lovely Sonnerat's Jungle Cock. Not far off was another, both without mates—I suspect the survivors of a quartette, imported by an English dealer, and all sold to the Directorate of these Gardens; a pair of which I was disappointed not to get. In October, a Bantam hen was the companion of one, and was wickedly employed in pecking out his spangled neck-hackle; in November, I was glad to find her removed.

Then come cobalt Vulturine Guinea-fowls, and the greatest of the Columbine tribe, the Great-crowned Pigeon (*Goura coronata*); then lovely Siamese Fireback Pheasants (*Euplocamus ignitus*) which our older ornithologists called the "Macartney cock," in compliment to the great ambassador. Then a collection of Pennant's Parrakeets and Mealy Rosellas—the contrast of the rich glowing plumage of the former, and the soft shades of lavender and canary of the latter is beautiful, and the races seem to live in perfect harmony. Then Troupials and various foreign Pigeons; then more Bronze-wings, and more Pheasants; and in the great end aviary a collection of small Ducks, Mandarins, Carolinas and others, and various of the Penelope tribe. Forty-five years ago, in the charming old "Dovecote and Aviary," Mr. Dixon wrote of the Curassows and Guans as a possible addition in the future to our domestic birds. I believe they are to-day no nearer domestication than they were then, and I cannot say that I much admire them, either in the "Eastern Aviaries" of the Regent's Park, or in their still larger Parisian abode. They are by nature arboreal in their habits, and, doubtless, to be seen to advantage should be seen flying rom bough to bough, in their native South American forests.

(To be continued).

THE FRINGILLINÆ.

V.—THE BLACK-HEADED SISKIN.

Chrysomitris icterica, Licht.

By V. Castellan.

This charming little bird belongs to a group of small true finches which is distributed over a large portion of both the Old and New Worlds: being represented in Abyssinia, the Himalayas, Siberia, the United States, and especially South America. To the latter continent belongs the subject of my article, being an inhabitant of Brazil and the Argentine Republic as far as Patagonia. This species seems to be partially migratory in some districts. The colouring of this Siskin is yellow and black and almost the same as that of our English Siskin, except that the whole head is black instead of only having a black cap, like the latter. The female, which I have never seen alive, but only know from a plate, seems to be much lighter in colour and with a great deal of grey about her, and the head is not black.

They build their nests in the hollows formed by the small branches and the trunks of trees, and always prefer a poplar to build in. The nest is well made of several materials, lined with horsehair, down, or feathers. The eggs are delicate, small, and pure white: which is very curious in the case of a bird that builds an open nest. This species lives in small flocks, even in the breeding season, roving about in small communities with a rapid undulating flight. They feed chiefly on the ground, where seeds of various wild plants are consumed.

This lively and graceful little bird has not much of a song; it consists of a variety of short twittering notes, uttered very rapidly and continuously. The specimen I possess is only a moderate songster, but is very lively, being almost always on the move. He is inclined to be somewhat quarrelsome with his cage-mate, a hen Canary, with whom he has lived now for over a year, without, however, showing any signs of pairing. I still hope to be able to breed mules with him, as I believe such a thing has already taken place. He has been in my possession for nearly two years, I having bought him after the Crystal Palace Show, 1895, where he was shown by a dealer, newly imported and in poor condition. Having successfully got through his moult, and being in perfect condition, he easily won first prize at the last Palace Show.

I think this Siskin is quite hardy (as are most of his kind) and that he would do very well in an aviary. So far I have not

tried him out of doors; but in my bird-room, where the temperature has fallen as low as 45 degrees, he has never shown any signs of discomfort; and during the whole time I have had him, he has never ailed in the least. I hear that Mr. Erskine Allon has some half-dozen of this species in his bird-room, and that his experience agrees with mine as to their hardiness. My bird moults regularly every Autumn without any trouble; he is, however, not very fond of bathing, so that now and again I have to spray him.

His food is very simple, consisting principally of canary and rape seed, the latter being very much to his liking; he also has, now and then, some linseed and any other fancy seeds for a change.

This Siskin is by no means common, as I have only seen two besides mine: one at the last Palace Show, where he was entered in the wrong class, and the other at the last Aquarium Show, where, as far as I remember, he was noticed by the judge. This little bird, I think, is very desirable on account of his pretty though dark plumage, pleasing ways, and lively song.

VI.—THE SISKIN.

Chrysomitris spinus, Linn.

By Thomas Marshall.

This lively and altogether delightful little member of the *Fringillidæ* family is so truly a cosmopolitan in its habits that a list of the places where it is not to be found would probably be the easiest method of dealing with its habitat, but when I say that its proper home appears to be in the north of Europe, I think that for present purposes I shall have said all that need be said on that point. I will venture to add, however, that it is more common in England than is generally supposed. A bird-dealer acquaintance of mine, who gets consignments of Linnets from various parts of the Midlands, frequently has a few Siskins amongst them.

Speaking of Siskins to a bird-catcher (aviculture, like poverty, brings us into contact with queer folk) he told me that he had been catching, off and on, for forty years, and had in his time taken as many as seven dozen Siskins "at a pull," but then that only occurred in one of their flight years, because, he'd have me to know, that Siskins only visit England in flocks at intervals of seven years! Truly we live and learn.

As a cage-bird, the Siskin is much more desirable than many birds generally included under that head. It takes kindly

to captivity, and with reasonable care and attention soon adapts itself to its new surroundings and becomes quite tame. It seems blessed with a prodigious appetite, and for a bird of its size consumes an enormous quantity of food. As it only requires and does best on plain canary seed as a staple (hemp seed and maw seed are much appreciated in addition) the aviarist need not begrudge the little chap his living, especially when we are able to record the fact that, when not eating, it is either singing its quaint little song, or attending to its toilet.

It, as frequently as not, prefers to roost, if it can be called "roosting," on the wires, whether of cage or aviary, and sometimes head downwards. In its acrobatic performances it has something in common with the Titmice, and there is some resemblance in their respective bills.

I have never been able to understand why we see so few Siskin hybrids, because, in my experience, it is almost as ready to pair with other finches as the Greenfinch, which is saying a great deal. It is a matter of ancient history, however, for Mudie, writing fifty years ago, tells us that the hybrid produced between the Siskin and the Canary Finch is very handsome and fertile! Certainly the Siskin-Canary mule (I suppose I must refer to a bird with a Canary for one of its parents, as a "mule" and not as a "hybrid") is, to my mind, far prettier than some of the crosses which are produced in greater numbers.

In common with the other members of the finch family, the Siskin offers us some interesting varieties; some being much brighter in colour and markings than others, the differences in the cap especially being very noticeable. Some have the cap black and unbroken, while others have it laced, *i.e.*, the margins of the head-feathers are tinged with grey, giving the cap a spangled appearance, which, in a good specimen, has a very pleasing effect. A little patch of black feathers under the chin is, on some, very conspicuous, but on others hardly noticeable.

Writing in this connexion, it is curious to record how superior in colour and markings the genuine English-caught Siskin is, as a rule, to that of the Siskins sent to us by continental dealers; all of which seem to bear a more or less washed out appearance, and run smaller in size than those from our midland counties. I say it is curious, because just the reverse obtains in the case of the continental Goldfinches and Redpolls. It would be interesting to know the cause of these differences, and I think it would form a good subject for discussion in the pages of our Magazine at some future date.

THE DEFINITION OF A "BRITISH BIRD."

As there has been a considerable amount of discussion and some difference of opinion on this subject, I think it may be of advantage for me to briefly relate what has taken place, in order that the actual facts may be placed on record.

After the letters published in the November Magazine, only one more was received (from Mr. Harrison). The subject appeared to be one with which the Council, as a body, were not altogether well qualified to deal, and it was therefore proposed that it should be referred to a Special Committee consisting of Dr. Butler, and Messrs. Bonhote, Marshall, Seth-Smith, and Swaysland, with full power to settle the matter. This proposal was carried by the Council. The members of the Special Committee are all "British Bird men" *and* exhibitors, and were selected on account of this double qualification.

The following series of questions was then submitted to the members of the Special Committee, and the answers returned were embodied in the definition published in "Notices to Members" last month. There were some further questions, which were rendered useless by the nature of the replies to No. 4. A copy of Mr. Howard Saunders' List was sent round to the Special Committee with the questions, and also Mr. Harrison's letter.

Question 1.—Are you in favour of the Society preparing and publishing an independent list of its own? This was answered in the negative by a majority of the Committee.

Question 2.—Are you in favour of adopting Mr. Howard Saunders' list? This was answered in the affirmative by all, one member adding "with modifications."

Question 3.—If Mr. Saunders' List be adopted, are you in favour of those birds the English names of which are printed in Italics being excluded? This was answered in the affirmative by all.

Question 4.—Are you in favour of a separate list for Show purposes? This was answered in the negative by all.

The answers to the foregoing questions were then embodied in the following definition: "For the purposes of the Society, "British Bird" shall mean any individual (foreign Bullfinches and Goldfinches excepted) of any species included in Mr. Howard Saunders' Label List of British Birds (excluding those species the English names of which are in that list printed in Italics.)"

On the 20th of November, 1896, I wrote to the Manager of the Crystal Palace informing him of the adoption by the Council of the above definition, and suggesting its insertion in the Schedule of the next Palace Show. In reply I received a letter from the Manager, thanking us for the suggestion, but regretting that he did not see his way to "publish any particular standard for judging British or other birds in the rules." To this I replied, explaining that we had not suggested the publication of standards for judging, and asking him "to give the matter a little further consideration before he decided finally against it." I then received a letter from the Manager, dated the 24th November, saying, "On further consideration I have decided to print the note (mentioned in your former letter) in the Schedule." I thereupon wrote to the Editor of the *Feathered*

World announcing that the Manager of the Crystal Palace had promised to adopt our definition, and my letter appeared in that paper on the 4th of December. A few days after, I received the following letter from the Manager, dated the 7th of December: "Since writing you to say I would have a notice *re* Standard for British Birds printed in the Schedule for 1897, I have had several letters protesting against the adoption of any such rule, and I have also taken the opinion of the judges, who also consider that it would not be advisable to publish any rule. Under the circumstances, therefore, I shall leave the definition of a British bird to the judges, and shall not print anything in the Schedule." To that letter I replied as follows: "I think the Society has serious ground to complain of the course which you have pursued. In my last letter I asked you to give the matter 'a little further consideration before you decide finally against it,' but I did not ask you to at once pledge yourself to adopt the rule. However, in your next letter you distinctly and unconditionally promised to adopt it, and if, in so doing without consulting the judges, you acted unwisely, it was not my fault. Now, after you have led me into announcing in the *Feathered World* that you are going to adopt the Society's rule you withdraw from your promise and make the Society look extremely foolish. I consider that you have treated the Society very badly."

I do not wish to make any comment, in this place, on what has occurred, but I think everyone will agree with me that, if the Manager was bound to defer to the opinion of the judges, he ought to have consulted them in the first place.

By the same post as that by which I wrote to the Manager of the Crystal Palace, I wrote to the Hon. Secretary of the National British Bird and Mule Club, informing him of the adoption of the definition by our Society, and inviting the co-operation of the Club in getting it generally adopted. I added, "I should have much preferred previously to submit the matter to your Society," (before writing to the Manager of the Crystal Palace) "but as the time before the issue of their Schedule is now very short, I did not think it would be possible to do so without abandoning all hope of getting the rule into next year's Schedule."

It is important to bear in mind that the primary object of the rule is that it may be a guide in the general affairs of the Society, and that its adoption or rejection as a Show rule will not affect its usefulness in other ways.

Some letters on this subject appear in the Correspondence Columns this month.

HORATIO R. FILLMER, *Hon. Sec.*

AVICULTURAL SMALL-TALK.

There are now, or were recently, some very rare new arrivals at the Zoo. A pair of Franklin's Gulls *(Larus franklini)* are the first of their species to make their appearance in Regent's Park. The same may be said of the pair of White Rheas, which were only at the Gardens for a short visit on their way to the residence of their owner (Mr. Walter Rothschild) at Tring. The Common Rhea, the Great-billed Rhea, and Darwin's Rhea, have all been seen at the Zoo, but the White Rhea never before. The bird

differs from the common *Rhea americana* in being white instead of grey, with the exception of some feathers about the head and neck. Then there is a Brazilian Courlan (*Aramus scolopaceus*). The last specimen, purchased in 1875, died more than twenty years ago. The Courlan is about two feet in length, and bears a general resemblance to a large Rail. Its general colour is chocolate-brown, with a somewhat metallic lustre.

We have very great difficulty in accurately ascertaining the tastes of the majority of our readers. We try to do the best we can for them, and we believe that on the whole they are very well satisfied with the fare provided, but we are a good deal in the dark as to what is most appreciated and what left unread—we almost wish sometimes that the members would grumble more, and then we should know better what to avoid. We wish we could have a peep at our readers while they are cutting open their Magazines, and see to which pages they first apply the paper-knife.

It is certainly a pity that we cannot afford to give everyone coloured plates without extra charge; but it is, and, what is more, always will be, quite impossible. No increase in the number of members would ever enable us to give away a hand-coloured plate each month, for the cost of the hand-colouring of the extra copy required for each new member would just about absorb his subscription. If, therefore, we are expecting an increase of membership to enable us to give away a coloured plate monthly, we are like the Irishman who sold his goods under cost price and thought he made a profit by selling a large quantity. We must not, however, jump to the conclusion that more members would be useless, for the fact is they are wanted very badly, and the great drawback to the Society is its comparatively small membership. If we had 300 members we could have a plate every month (those who wish for it coloured paying extra for it) and we could also have more illustrations in the body of the Magazine, like Mr. Astley's charming drawing which we publish this month. Will the members please do their utmost this year to gain recruits so that next year we may be able to afford a plate every month?

We find that some of our remarks about the *Feathered World* in the November Magazine have been misunderstood—they were perhaps a little misleading. It is true that the correspondence in that paper is, of course, unpaid (and we think the correspondence is the best part of the *F. W.*) but most of the articles are paid for, and, of course, the Show Reports.

A member of the Society thinks that aviculturists ought to be warned against trusting specimens of the genus *Petronia* among other birds. A pair of *Petronia flavicollis* "managed to kill, in a travelling box as they were being brought from Marseilles, six Parrot Finches, four *Lagonostica brunneiceps*, a Pectoral Finch, a Sydney Waxbill, and various Mannikins; a little hole being neatly drilled in their heads." After this performance, we are not surprised to hear that the happy possessor of these blood-thirsty little birds keeps them in a cage, and does not trust them loose in his bird-room. A well known dealer lost nearly £100 worth of birds through the destructiveness of one cock of the same or a similar species.

We hear that one of the judges of British birds at the Crystal Palace actually threatened to resign if the Avicultural Society's definition of a British bird were adopted. We may be mistaken, but we fancy that the news of the resignation of either, or both, of the British judges would be received by aviculturists generally with perfect equanimity.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WHAT IS A BRITISH BIRD?

SIR,—On behalf of the Committee of the British Bird and Mule Club, I have addressed the following letter to the Crystal Palace Company, *re* the acceptation by the Company of the Avicultural Society's decision that "British Birds" shall mean any individual (foreign Bullfinches and Goldfinches excepted) of any species included in Mr. Howard Saunders' Label List of British Birds (excluding those species the English names of which are printed in italics):—

DEAR SIR,—At the monthly meeting of the Committee of the British Birds and Mule Club, held on Thursday last, it was proposed and carried unanimously, that "the British Bird and Mule Club draw up a list of birds that shall be entitled to compete for their gold medals given for most points in British classes," and at the same meeting the information transpired that the Crystal Palace Company would, at their forthcoming show, accept as British birds all those species, the names of which were printed in capitals in Howard Saunders' List. In a full Committee Meeting a long and interesting discussion took place on the matter, and, in the end, I was desired, as a vice-president and chairman of the Club, to point out to you that such a regulation would admit among British Birds such species as the Blue-throat, Barred-Warbler, Savi's-Warbler, Tawny-Pipit, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Two-barred Crossbill, Ortolan Bunting, Lapland Bunting, Nutcracker, Crested Lark, Short-toed Lark, and Bee-eater, not to mention many other varieties which have never yet been admitted as British birds in show competitions. I am further to mention that while the B.B. & M.C. would be most anxious not to oppose the Avicultural Society, yet the members of the Committee feel that they cannot support a show at which the above-mentioned birds are accepted as British birds. A satisfactory list of British Birds for show purposes cannot be compiled from Mr. Howard Saunders' list, which includes any bird of which six specimens have been shot, captured, or seen during the past two hundred years or so, and our own list will not be decided on without full discussion amongst our members and any others who may be interested in the matter. Our Committee hope, therefore, that the Avicultural Society's definition will not be accepted by the Crystal Palace Company, and that the British classes will be under the same conditions as heretofore. That the Avicultural Society's adoption of Mr. Howard Saunders' list is an unsatisfactory method of deciding a very important question is best shewn by Mr. Fillmer's own note, "That even a bad rule would be better than no rule at all." This may be, but in the near future the Committee of the N.B.B. & M.C. hope to frame a rule which will not come under the category of bad rules.

On behalf of the Committee,

Yours faithfully,

The Manager, Crystal Palace Bird Show. HENRY J. FULLJAMES.

[The above letter appeared in *Fur and Feather* of the 10th December, and the following answer in the same paper on the 17th December, 1896.]

Referring to the letter by Mr. Fulljames in your issue of the 10th inst., I regret to say that the manager of the Crystal Palace Company has withdrawn his promise to insert the Avicultural Society's rule in the schedule of the Crystal Palace Show. Mr. Fulljames' letter, no doubt, assisted in bringing this about, but I think the manager's action has been mainly due to the interference of some of the judges, who seem not to be content with their judicial functions, but to aim at legislative powers also.

The Avicultural Society's rule was drawn up mainly with a view to the general purposes of the Society, and its application to Bird Shows is of merely secondary importance. It was, however, drawn up by a Special Committee of our Council, after the most careful consideration of the whole question, and that Special Committee unanimously rejected a proposal to draw up a separate and independent list for show purposes. The objection to a different list for show purposes is that it would have the effect of excluding from the British classes at shows birds which are always recognised as British species—we should then have a new riddle—"When is a British Bird not a British Bird?" Answer: "When it is at a Bird Show." There is already a good deal that is illogical and unscientific about our Shows, and we do not want to make them more absurd.

The objectors to the Avicultural Society's rule seem to be under the impression that it would lead to the flooding of the British classes with birds which have hitherto been excluded from those classes—I think I can shew that this a mistake. For all practical purposes British Cage Birds may be considered as belonging to one or the other of two orders, and those two orders, under our rule, include 115 species. Of these, 85 are recognised as British by everyone, and could not possibly be excluded from any list; one of the others (the Alpine Swift), is not a Cage Bird, so that there are only 29 as to which there can be any dispute. These 29 are: White's Thrush, the Black Redstart, the Bluethroat, the Barred Warbler, the Firecrest, the Marsh Warbler, Savi's Warbler, the Alpine Accentor, the White Wagtail, the Blue-headed Yellow Wagtail, the Tawny Pipit, Richard's Pipit, the Golden Oriole, the Great Grey Shrike, the Woodchat Shrike, the Waxwing, the Redbreasted Flycatcher, the Mealy Redpoll, the Two-barred Crossbill, the Ortolan Bunting, the Lapland Bunting, the Rose-coloured Starling, the Nutcracker, the Crested Lark, the Short-toed Lark, the Shore Lark, the Roller, the Bee-eater, and the Hoopoe. Of these species the Black Redstart, the Marsh Warbler, the White Wagtail, the Blue-headed Yellow Wagtail, the Golden Oriole, the Woodchat Shrike, and the Hoopoe, breed in this country; it would, therefore, be obviously preposterous to exclude them from any list of British Birds. The Fire-crested Wren, the Mealy Redpoll, the Lapland Bunting, and the Roller, have all been caught in considerable numbers. Thus only 18 species are left as to which there can be any possible doubt. And it must not be supposed that the inclusion of these 18 species in the British classes is an innovation, for during the last five years three of the 18 (namely, the Waxwing, the Shore Lark, and the Great Grey Shrike), have been exhibited at the Palace as British Birds. Moreover, three other species, not British under the Avicultural Society's rule, have been so exhibited. These last are the Serin Finch, the Black-headed Bunting, and the Scarlet Grosbeak. On the other hand, only two of these doubtful species—the

Waxwing and the Bluethroat—have, during the same period, been exhibited in the Foreign classes.* It would, of course, be very desirable, if it were possible, to exclude from the British classes all foreign-caught specimens.† But it is not possible, as in most species those caught in Britain are absolutely identical in plumage with those caught elsewhere. Any attempt to exclude an undoubtedly British species might lead to the great hardship of the exclusion of some rare British-caught specimens.

It is unnecessary for me to enlarge upon the urgent necessity for some rule upon the subject. That is universally admitted. The Avicultural Society has proposed a rule which the British Bird and Mule Club, and the judges at the Crystal Palace, will not accept. It is now the duty of our critics to at once propose a rule or list of their own. By adroitly quoting my remark about a bad rule being better than no rule at all, Mr. Fulljames has almost made it appear as if I personally disapproved of the rule. This is not so. I consider the rule the best which could be drawn up which would have any chance of general acceptance. I confess that I am sceptical as to the power of the Committee of the British Bird and Mule Club to draw up a list or rule which will not be even more open to criticism. Nevertheless, as the Council of the Avicultural Society has no object in view but the advancement of aviculture, it will, doubtless, gladly support any fair and unprejudiced attempt to settle the matter. At the same time, the multiplication of rules and lists is to be deprecated, as it must lead to much confusion.

HORATIO R. FILLMER,
Hon. Sec. Avicultural Society.

SIR,—The promise of the Manager of the Crystal Palace to insert in the Schedule of the forthcoming Cage Bird Show the Avicultural Society's definition of a British bird, has called forth a considerable amount of dissatisfaction from British bird exhibitors; the reason, I take it, being that they are afraid of some rare bird taking the prize and their's going unnoticed.

Nevertheless, I think it will not be long before exhibitors of British birds come to the conclusion that it is far better to admit any species included in the British list. To me it seems absurd to exclude a species such as the Waxwing, which is a comparatively common winter visitor to this country. On the other hand, nine out of ten of the Bearded Tits one sees in British classes at Shows, may safely be considered as Continental specimens.

We are not likely to see either Rollers or Bee-eaters at shows, but should one appear it would be a rare treat for lovers of British birds.

No one is more in a position to decide what species are "British" than Mr. Howard Saunders, who is undoubtedly one of the best authorities

---

* To put this argument more briefly and pointedly:—All the 115 species admissible under the Society's rule are, and have been for years, admissible into the British classes at the Palace Show. On the other hand several species, not British in any reasonable sense of the word, but which have hitherto been exhibited in the British classes, would under our rule be excluded from those classes. The Society's rule would, therefore, actually tend to exclude doubtful species, not to admit them.—H. R. F.

† It should be remembered that most of the Siskins and Mealy Redpoles are foreign-caught. Also that large numbers of Continental (not Russian) Bullfinches and Goldfinches are exhibited as British without being questioned.—H. R. F.

on British birds of the present day. He has compiled a list of species, all of which are admitted by the best authorities to be British. Then what better definition of a British bird could there be than "any individual of any species included in Mr. Howard Saunders' Label List of British birds (excluding those species the English names of which are in that list printed in italics)"? And why should this list not be adopted at our principal bird shows? My own opinion on the subject is this: we should accept any species in the British classes that is recognised by the highest authorities of the day as "British," and we should allow any specimen of that species in the British classes, whether or not that individual was obtained within the British Isles. If the species is included in the British list we should admit the individual (irrespective of where it was obtained) as a representative of a recognised British species.

It is absolutely impossible to prevent foreign-caught birds from being exhibited in British classes, unless we exclude almost every rare bird, and the British classes are of very small interest to many if no rare birds are shown. I am quite sure that if rarer birds were admitted into the British classes those classes would be far better appreciated by lovers of British birds.

D. SETH-SMITH.

SIR,—The intended adoption of our rule by the Crystal Palace authorities seems to have stirred up a great deal of latent indignation, which, personally, I was rather afraid it would. With your permission, I should like to state my views on the subject, but, at the same time I wish it to be clearly understood that these views are only my own individual opinions, being put forward as such and without consulting any other members of the Council. The facts of the case are already before you, and the position seems to be as follows:—

On the one side stand the judges, who are adverse to a rule which should in any way restrict their powers. Next comes the Manager of the Show, who, after accepting our rule, rejects it, clearly shewing that he will follow whichever side is the stronger. Lastly comes the B.B. & M.C., together with a few other exhibitors, who see the necessity of a rule but object to ours.

It does not seem to me that the Council would be justified in taking any further steps, without learning first of all what the wishes of members are on this subject. There are but two courses open; either to enter into communication with the other Society or Societies (if there be any others), in order that a rule, satisfactory to all exhibitors, should be drawn up, which the Manager of the Palace Show might easily be forced to accept by the threat to withdraw British bird entries should he refuse, which I am sure he would not do under those circumstances. The other course is for the Society to have no more to do with the matter. I think members should be given an early opportunity of expressing their opinion on this matter.

J. LEWIS BONHOTE.

BREEDING MEALWORMS.

SIR,—I have referred to the Index in the *Avicultural Magazine*, and not finding any directions for successfully rearing these worms, if it is of sufficient interest to our fellow-members, I will relate my experience.

is getting on for twenty years since I first started the keepi
birds, and for three parts of that time I followed the
in various bird books as to the proper way to get
pagate. I was fortunate up to the Chrysalis state—then
re attacked by thousands of very minute insects, whut to state may be
iem before they could turn into beetles. Then fo readers.
changes" by feeding them on barley meal, whe
potatoes and carrots, Spratt's dog biscuits whole wo gallon jars with layers
experiments in feeding. Perhaps what I am e inches of the top, and tied
a case of "coals to Newcastle" to some the contents are overlooked, by

For the last two years I have fille sifting out the different layers. From
of *thick brown paper and bran* to withi and drop them into a tin that measures
a muslin cover over them. Occasio s. The food now supplied is thin captain's
spreading a newspaper on a table ful sight to see a biscuit perforated by these
these I pick out the fattest reminds me of a skeleton leaf. Manicure nippers
about 5 ins. high by 2½ ins up the selected worms.
biscuits; and it is a wo have elapsed without the chrysalides being destroyed by
hungry little fellows. s
are useful in pick enemy, I consider that my manner of treatment has been

As two y W. T. CATLEUGH.
their very tin
fairly teste

THE AGE OF CAGE-BIRDS.

SIR,—In the November number our Secretary wishes for information on the above subject, also whether white feathers appearing are caused by age.

At the present time I have a hen Dwarf Finch, purchased in Nov. 1893, with white feathers in the tail. A hen Zebra Waxbill, bought 12th June, 1890, which went bare for some months at the back of the neck, has the once bald space covered with a patch of white. A hen African Grey Waxbill, that came to me on 11th June, 1889, has white feathers in the tail.

To test how long these wee mites could live in captivity, I used to buy a certain number of each species, and not obtain any more until the last had died. Unfortunately, through my hanging a bath (with one of the supports partly broken) at an open door of a large cage, my experiment received a severe check, for a favourite Persian cat of my wife's was shut in the room one evening, and managed to get the bath away, so that all my birds were dead when morning came. Unhappily, three years afterwards, the cat was again accidentally shut in the room, and there was a similar slaughter.

I give the age of the Waxbills at the time they were massacred:—Green Avadavat, 6 years; Orange Breast, 7¼ years; Orange Cheek, 8½ years; African Grey, 8 years; St. Helena Waxbill, 7¾ years; Lavender Finch, 8¼ years; Cordon-bleu, 6 years.

I have been living in the country for the last 10 years, and know that small finches and waxbills live longer in the pure air than when kept in a town. The dreadful fogs used to make the Avicultural Death Rate rapidly rise.

...ated my attempts to register the time thes... they receive their call to depart to their ... nds, I trust that I may live long enough to send you c... Old Age" from the little friends that I now have.

W. T. CATLEUGH.

SIR,—I have ... treatment of newly-i... sent to me (at different ti... full plumage: these have a... often died in a very short time a...

...DIAN FINCHES.

...interested in the several notes on the ...dian Finches. I have had a number ... friend in N.E. Queensland, mostly in my friend called them) and were brou... rently in the best of health, but understands the treatment of birds. He ...ved them.

The last lot sent me were young ... which he supplied them with fresh each day ... uncoloured Painted Finches as Red Sea; the next stopping-place was at Suez, ...e by a man who thoroughly with another lot, which lasted till he reached home on board a bag of sand, sixty-three I did not lose a single bird. ...lasted till he reached the

I think the best way is to get young birds, and a gr... re he supplied himself on the treatment on the voyage home. These were fed on ...t from a cage of only, and sweet biscuit finely powdered thrown into the cage, ... seemed to eat very readily. I fed them in the same way, and ke... deal depends till most of them were nearly in full colour, without the loss of a ...anary seed bird. ...hich they ... them ...le

JAMES B. HOUSD...

PARRAKEET HYBRIDS.

SIR,—A friend of mine, living at Trowbridge, last year had a cock Rosella which paired with a hen Cockatiel. The Cockatiel laid and hatched four young: but one day, noticing that the parent birds did not enter the box, my friend looked in and found the four young ones dead: they were then about fourteen days old.

Has anyone ever succeeded in rearing young from this cross? I wonder whether they would be crested? I have reared young from cock Mealy and hen Red Rosella, and my Pennants and Rosellas have paired, and laid eggs which, after being incubated, proved unfertile.

C. P. ARTHUR.

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Dec. 6th, 1893.

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Testimonial from H. T. T. CAMPS, Esq., F.Z.S., the Parrot Judge at Crystal Palace.

Haddenham, Isle of Ely, Oct. 17th, 1896.

DEAR SIR,—Just a line to express my satisfaction of the admirable manner in which you have executed the work I have entrusted to you. I observe with pleasure the natural attitude of the birds, which undoubtedly is due to your knowledge of Natural History, an acquaintance of which must be a great acquisition to a Taxidermist.

Note the Address:

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(Continued from page 2 of cover).

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION.

Mr. MARTIN F. HITCHINS, Trevarrick, St. Austell.
Proposed by Mr. FILLMER.

Mr. H. C. MARTIN, 16, Victoria Road, Old Charlton, S.E.

Mrs. ALLBUTT, 24, Park Square, Leeds.

Mr. J. H. COMYNS, B.A., Oxon., Lyveden, Newton Abbot, S. Devon.
Proposed by Dr. BUTLER.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Mr. AUG. F. WIENER, 2, Upper Bedford Place, Russell Square, W.C.

Mr. CONLEY DEASE, of Arrah, Shahabad, India, not having paid his subscription for the year 1895-6, the Executive Committee, in pursuance of Rule 3, have to announce that he has ceased to be a member of the Society.

MEMBERS' SALE AND EXCHANGE COLUMN.

The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 6 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable.*

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FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

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THE

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GREAT BUSTARDS.

By W. H. St. Quintin.

Very possibly some of the readers of the *Avicultural Magazine* may at some time entertain the idea of keeping these splendid birds, and in that case my experience, (extending over the past eleven years, during which I have never been without several specimens) may be of use. I have kept Great Bustards which have come from Spain, East Germany, and Hungary. At present, I have only one pair. The male, a fine seven or eight years old bird, came from Germany, while his female companion is Spanish. An old female, one of the first pair which I ever had, has died recently from the effects of an accident, after being in my possession just eleven years. Although the males have always shown off in the spring, I have never seen here any signs of breeding, except that the female just mentioned did, three or four summers ago, drop an egg without scratching a nest. Though my birds have the run of an enclosure of a quarter of an acre, part in grass, partly gravelled, and often with a plot of rye or barley, sown in the middle of it, I have not yet induced them to go to nest. Many of your readers will have seen that in Regent's Park they have been more successful; for one of the females in the Bustard enclosure, a bird which, by the bye, once belonged to me, has for several seasons laid eggs, and has sat upon them; though, probably from being too much disturbed by visitors, and by the Cranes in the neighbouring paddocks, hitherto without result.

The assumption in the male of the nuptial plumage, by which I mean the long moustachios and the chestnut pectoral bands, is a gradual process extending over several months, and is interesting to watch. The whiskers or moustachios are shed early in July, when the annual moult commences; and they do not appear again until just before Christmas. From that time,

until about the end of February, they are slowly increasing in length. The pectoral bands do not appear with the young feathers after the autumn moult, but are put on in the spring.

The extraordinary "play" of the male, as the breeding season approaches, commences with a slight inflation of the throat, and a partial reversal of the tail-feathers over the back. But it is not until he is in the height of the breeding "orge" (ὀργή) that he assumes the, to us, supremely ridiculous attitude which has been so well reproduced by Wolf and other artists.

At this season tame Bustards become most impudent. At one time I had two fine old males, who used to rush at an intruder; and I have often, to protect my legs from the furious digs of their beaks, walked across the enclosure holding one in each hand by the neck; the birds angrily protesting with their gruff barking grunts, but not exhibiting the least fear, and ready to resume the attack the instant they were released.

In order to take a portrait of a male in the height of his play, I had to take the photograph through a wire netting, so as to keep the bird at the required distance.

But, tame though the birds may be with those whom they know, they are very easily thrown into a paroxysm of terror by a strange dog, or even by the too abrupt approach of a visitor with whom they are not familiar.

When alarmed like this, Bustards will dash themselves against the fence of their enclosure; and, as their bones are extremely frail and brittle, in proportion to the weight of the bird, they may suffer serious damage. It is better to pinion the birds: tying up the arteries previously, by passing a double thread between the two bones of the wing, and bringing the two ends of each thread together with a firm knot.

I was formerly afraid to perform this operation; but as the flight feathers are a long while coming down, the unpinioned birds require catching several times during the moult, which is very undesirable.

The food, which my birds get, is chiefly barley-meal, made into a crumbly ball with Spratt's game-meal and crissel, cabbage-heads, bread and potatoes. Some of my birds have eaten chopped rabbit readily, also mice. Those which I have now will seldom touch any of these. But they should, especially in winter, have as much animal food as they will take. The main requisites for keeping Bustards healthy, are:—1st, a good space to roam in, where they can find a good deal of natural insect food and clean grass; 2nd, shelter from strong winds in the

shape of bushes or hurdles packed with straw; 3rd, if possible, a light, dry soil, with facilities for dusting. The enclosure must be effectually fenced against the intrusion of dogs, and of course of foxes. Though the plumage of the Bustards is soft, and they suffer much discomfort from continued wet, they seldom, of their own accord, seek shelter from any kind of roof overhead; but good thick evergreen bushes, dotted about, will afford a good deal of protection from bad weather, and they readily avail themselves of it.

THE NESTING IN CAPTIVITY OF THE RIBBON FINCH.

By CORIOLANUS.*

I have always "gone in" for British birds rather than foreigners, (though I have not been very successful in breeding them) and an article on a foreign species is a little out of my line. Still, I succeeded one year in rearing a good number of young Ribbon Finches, and it may interest the readers of the *Avicultural Magazine* to hear the story.

But no. I won't tell the story just as it happened, for I did many stupid things with my Ribbon Finches, and I don't want to expose myself to the friendly contempt of those members of our Society who are more learned about the habits and customs of foreign finches than I am. I will tell my readers, instead, how they ought to proceed, setting down, however, naught which I have not proved the truth of by personal experience.

And one word more in preface. What I am going to say refers only to breeding Ribbon Finches in-doors: for I have never tried them in an out-door aviary.

I do not intend to write an eulogy of the Ribbon Finch, for my deliberate opinion is that it is a hateful little bird, but it has one great advantage over the Parson Finch, the Silverbill, the Bronze Mannikin, and some other easily-bred species, in that the sexes are readily distinguished both in mature and immature birds. The Cut-throat mark of the male Ribbon Finch is unmistakable. You will therefore have no difficulty in selecting a pair. And if you have made up your mind to try to

* To the writer of this article (Mr. S. Perkins) has been awarded the prize of one guinea offered by the Society for the best article on the nesting in captivity of some common species of foreign bird.

breed this species I should advise you to purchase at least two pairs.

The great point is to obtain really strong, healthy hens, for it is absolute waste of time to attempt to breed with a hen which is in the least "puffy," or "sleepy," or out of condition. If possible, buy aviary-bred birds, firstly, because they are more hardy and, therefore, less likely to cause disappointment, and, secondly, because it is right to encourage the sale of aviary-bred birds. If the birds are aviary-bred it will be well to keep the sexes apart for two or three months to make sure that they are sufficently matured before allowing them to nest. If they are newly-imported birds, this separation will be equally necessary in order to give the birds time to recover from the effects of the change of climate and the hardships they have undergone. Of course, if you can get aviary-bred birds which you know to be several months old, or imported birds which have been over some time, you may begin operations at once, if the time of the year be suitable.

And this brings me to another point. Ribbon Finches and their relations will nest at any time of the year, but if they have a preference, it is for the time when our English winter is either near at hand or in full blast. If you let them follow their own sweet will, and set up housekeeping with the temperature below 60°, you may possibly rear some young birds; but the chances are ten to one that the hen will be egg-bound, and then you will get nothing but disappointment for yourself, and misery and death for your birds. You can, of course, keep up an artificial temperature of over 60° even in the severest frost, but it is difficult to do it and at the same time supply plenty of fresh air, without which you are not likely to have much success. If you take my advice, you won't attempt breeding until the spring, (say the end of April or the beginning of May) and even then you ought to have means of producing artificial heat in case there should be a spell of cold weather.

I never had any success with breeding Ribbon Finches (or indeed any birds besides Canaries) in cages. No doubt it is possible to breed them in cages, but I think it is much more difficult than in aviaries, unless the cages be very large. Wire netting is now so cheap that a small bird-room aviary can be made at much less expense than the cost of a large cage; I therefore strongly advise everyone to try aviary-breeding in preference. The aviary need not be large, but it should go right up to the ceiling of the room, and the nest boxes should be fixed high up on the wall, near the ceiling. Almost any kind of nest box will do.

either cocoa-nut husks, or Hartz-cages, or the well-known cigar-box pattern. I think the birds prefer the husks, but I prefer the cigar-boxes, as they are cleaner and it is easier to remove dead nestlings from them.

There must not be more than one pair of Ribbon Finches in the same aviary, and it is better that there should be no other occupants. But Ribbon Finches, as a rule, are tolerably peaceable, and at the same time very capable of defending their nests; therefore, other birds may often be placed in the aviary without disaster ensuing.

Fine hay is sufficient for the nest, and the best plan is to throw some handfuls into a corner of the aviary, for the exercise of carrying it up to the nest-box is good for the birds.

As to food:—Of course there must be a constant supply of white millet and canary seed, and in addition either "spray millet" or the so-called "Indian" millet should be given. Egg-food in some form is also required for feeding the young, and I found that hard-boiled egg and biscuit, prepared as if for Canaries, was preferred to the preserved egg, but the preserved egg would doubtless do as well and is much more convenient. Soaked ants' eggs may also be given, but are certainly not essential; I cannot say whether the birds succeed better without them, for according to my experience they did neither good nor harm.

Green meat should be given daily while there are young in the nest. Chickweed (not too rank and luxuriant), water cress, and lettuce, are all good. Groundsel is useless. Water cress is very wholesome and much liked by the birds, but is said to be sometimes the means of introducing bird-fever.

Crushed egg-shell should be supplied, especially when the hens are laying. But if the hens be healthy and the weather warm there is not much risk of egg-binding.

And now, having waited till the proper season, placed your birds in a suitable aviary, and supplied them with everything they require in the way of food and nesting materials, you naturally expect to rear brood after brood without mishap. Well, you may do so, and on the other hand you may not. Ribbon Finches are most perverse creatures, and will often persist in doing what they are expected and wished not to do.

You must not attempt to examine the nests, or interfere with them in any way, and if you can restrain yourself from undue curiosity the eggs will generally be hatched, but unfortunately it does not follow that all the young, or indeed, any of them, will

be reared. I do not know the cause, but in my experience one or more of the young in every nest are almost sure to die. If this occur soon after hatching the little body is thrown out of the nest and will be found on the floor of the aviary, but if it take place when the nestling is over a week old the corpse remains in the nest and soon causes a truly awful smell. When this is discovered (the smell I mean) you must examine the nest and remove the dead bird. Sometimes the whole brood will die. So far as my experience goes, Ribbon Finches do not throw out their young alive, but if other aviculturists have actually known it to happen I am of course prepared to believe it; however, at present I am disposed to think it is a myth. The presence of young in the nest can always be known by the noise they make while being fed. As they grow older this noise becomes very loud. They leave the nest when nearly three weeks old, and are then perfectly fledged; the red collar of the male is then clearly visible, though not nearly so bright as it afterwards becomes. The old birds show much affection for their young and much resent being separated from them. It is not wise to remove the young so long as the parents continue to feed them, and yet their presence often leads to the failure of the next brood. For this reason Ribbon Finches and similar species frequently only rear every other brood.

Having reared your young Ribbon Finches, you will probably find that there is no sale for them, and that you are rather tired of these common, noisy and (under certain circumstances mentioned above) nasty smelling birds. You will, however, have gained some experience which may be of help to you in breeding rarer and more attractive species.

THE FRINGILLINÆ.

VII.—THE GREEN SINGING FINCH.

Serinus icterus, Bona et Vieill.

By W. T. Catleugh.

Our Hon. Secretary has asked me to write an article on the Green Singing Finch for this series, as I appear to be the only member who has succeeded in getting this bird to bring its young to maturity.

The Green Singing Finch is too well known for a description of its appearance to be needed. The only bird with which it could very well be confused is the St. Helena Seed-eater (*Serinus flaviventris*), but although the two species are singularly

alike in plumage, they can be readily distinguished by the difference in size, the St. Helena Seed-eater being much the larger bird—as large, in fact, as a good-sized Canary. Unfortunately, there are no means of telling the sex of the Green Singing Finch readily and with certainty. Dr. Butler says "the hen is paler in colouring than the cock, is somewhat browner above, and has a white spot on the chin."—*Foreign Finches in Captivity*, page 36. But this white spot (if it always exists in the female) is very difficult to detect, and the other differences in colour are differences in degree only, and depend almost as much upon age as upon sex; thus an old female may be much brighter than a young male. In choosing a pair, a good plan is to select one very bright bird and one much duller in colour. But, of course, the test of song is the most certain.

Minute differences in plumage may be noticed in specimens of this species, and some have supposed that there are more than one species imported—it is probable, however, that these are, at most, nothing more than local varieties of the same species.

I have referred to the note book which I kept at the time when I bred the Green Singing Finch, and will give an account of my treatment of these sweet songsters. They are, however, by no means "sweet" to other birds, being most quarrelsome little fellows, although some people differ from me about their pugnacity.

When first the birds came into my possession, they were turned into a waggon-cage a yard long and half-a-yard wide, which contained about two dozen Waxbills of all sorts. As they were so quarrelsome, not only in chasing each other about, but taking hold of the other wee inmates and making them cry out, I resolved to put them into a small breeding cage, never thinking for a moment that they would breed—for it seemed to me that I had been "had," and that, instead of a genuine pair, they were two cocks. However, to give them a chance, I removed the nesting boxes and division at the end of the cage, and, in their place, put a cocoanut shell which had part of a cowhair nest-bag pressed tightly into the bottom and sides. This the birds altered but very little, and a tiny piece of chickweed and half-a-dozen blades of grass, which they carried up, were all the additions that they made to it. I have found that it is a mistake to allow birds to have access to a lot of building material, for when I first began my apprenticeship to the breeding of foreign birds, with Zebra Finches, they would, after sitting a few days, carry up chickweed, grass in flower, *and even ants' eggs*, and entirely cover their eggs.

The cage was further altered by cutting extra holes for seed-tins. The diet was canary seed, Indian millet, Italian millet, maw seed, and, as a stimulant, preserved yolk of egg mixed with one-third Jamaica sugar, *this prevents egg binding.* Sponge cake, crumbled, was also given every morning.

The only available room that faced S.W. was the children's day-nursery; the cage was hung against the window-shutters. To give as much light as possible to the little prisoners, the wooden end of the cage nearest the window was cut out, and a pane of glass inserted. The blind was never drawn down, so that they had the benefit of the whole of the daylight. A bath was kept hanging at the open door. Five eggs were laid, and the offspring successfully reared. Whether the first hatched was a precocious youngster I know not, anyway, it began to sing before it was seven weeks old.

The Green Singing Finch has been crossed with the Canary both in Germany and in England.

VIII.—THE LESSER REDPOLL.

Acanthis rufescens, Vieill.

By G. C. Swailes.

This charming little bird, the smallest of our native Finches, is decidedly rare as a breeding species in the southern part of our Island, though it has been reported once as breeding so far south as the Isle of Wight, and has probably nested in most of the southern counties: but it breeds commonly in all the counties of England north of Norfolk and Leicester and in most of the Scottish counties. Seebohm says there is but one record of its breeding out of Britain; but according to Howard Saunders nests have since been found by other naturalists in Switzerland, and he says "it appears probable that this species inhabits the greater part of the mountain ranges of Central Europe."

It is strange, indeed, that a bird so common here should have been observed on only two or three occasions on that wonderful island Heligoland; on one of these instances, however, the birds remained and bred in Mr. Gätke's garden.

A detailed description of the colour of this well-known bird is unnecessary, being chiefly brown, with, in the adult male, a crimson crown, breast, and rump: the female having the crimson crown alone. The young acquire the colouring on the head at the first moult (the breast at this time is slightly marked with red) and the full-coloured breast at the second

moult; I have seen young males breeding without a tinge of crimson on the breast. Unfortunately, if kept caged, the bright colours are lost at the first moult and replaced by feathers of a bronzy yellow, but in a good-sized aviary, if given plenty of green food, insects, etc., they will keep almost as good a colour as those at liberty.

As an aviary bird it is one of the easiest to reconcile to captivity, and few are more interesting. It lacks much gift as a songster, but the twitter of both sexes and the few notes of the male during the breeding season, though not loud, are very agreeable.

It is one of the readiest species to breed in confinement, and in an aviary will generally rear young if supplied with groundsel-tops, flowering grass, etc.: a branch infested with *Aphides* is a great treat at this time, every insect being picked off and again disgorged to feed the young. A pair in my aviary reared three broods during the summer of 1895.

The seed of the alder and birch is much sought after as food, but in captivity they will thrive well on canary and rape seed: if allowed too much hemp they get too fat and unhealthy. A little hemp may be given as a change, and it is better to have it slightly crushed, as Redpolls can only remove the husk with difficulty, and I have known the cutting-edge of their beaks considerably damaged with feeding on this seed.

Here, in East Yorkshire, this bird is popularly known in the country as "French Linnet" and also as "Chevvy Linnet,"—the word Chevvy, I suppose, somewhat resembling the note usually given when flying.

In captivity, hybrids have been bred between this bird and the Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Linnet, Bullfinch, and Canary.

Varieties in abnormal plumage are not very rare, and in all the individuals which have come under my notice, whether white or cinnamon coloured, the crimson cap has been retained, though fading, if kept caged, at the first moult, to yellow. A beautiful bird I possessed, and which was awarded a prize at the Crystal Palace Show in, I think, 1894, had the head and shoulders white, but had a brilliant cap and breast; I paired this with a nearly half-white pied hen, which had two nests of infertile eggs. At the death of the first-named bird, on dissection it proved to be a female; it was, I imagine, an old bird, and the fact of its having a red breast was probably analogous to the not uncommon assumption of the plumage and spurs of the cock Pheasant by old, and probably diseased, hens.

REVIEW.

"British Birds: their Nests and Eggs." Volume I.—Passeres, by Dr. A. G. Butler. (Brumby & Clarke, Limited, 5, Farringdon Avenue, London, E.C., and Hull.) *

Of late the British public has been deluged with books dealing with the avifauna of these Islands, but none have been so neatly and well got up as "British Birds, their Nests and Eggs," which Messrs. Brumby and Clarke, of Hull, are now bringing out in parts.

There is a full-sized plate of every undoubted British species, by Mr. Frohawk, and each month a coloured plate of eggs, by the same artist, while the letterpress of the *Passeres* is in the hands of Dr. Butler, who needs no recommendation to readers of this Magazine. The book is written, throughout, in Dr. Butler's pleasing and easy style, and deals fully with all phases in the life of each bird.

Quotations have been freely borrowed from many well known authors, especially in matters relating to geographical distribution and descriptions of plumage. In disputed points, Dr. Butler has carefully abstained from innovations and from forcing his beliefs on his readers, but gives in clear and concise language both sides of the argument and leaves the readers to form their own opinion. In regard to aviculture, Dr. Butler has practically only his own experience to give us; but whose experience, save, perhaps, that of the late Lord Lilford, could well be better?

Although the book is, professedly, a popular one, it contains much of great value to the scientist; no book since Seebohm's "British Birds" has dealt so fully with the habits of our feathered fauna, whilst aviculture is dealt with in a manner which no one else has before attempted.

We could find no bad inaccuracies or omissions, and the book shows further evidence of having been compiled and written with great care. One point, only, calls for redress, and that is a certain want of arrangement: the facts are all there, but it would have been better had they been re-arranged before finally going to press.

Dr. Butler's remarks on the trapping and slaughtering of the Blackbird, on account of its propensity for fruit, are well

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* Now issuing from the press, in weekly parts price 6d., and monthly parts price 2/-.

meant, although it is open to doubt whether its numbers in England would be increased if such practices were put an end to.

As regards doubtful species, the author has done most wisely in just mentioning their occurence, with data, and leaving it to the reader's discretion to consider them British or not.

We cannot agree with the remark that the Wheatear is scarcer in the southern portion of these Islands, having found it distributed in suitable localities quite as abundantly in the south as in the north. Speaking of the plumage of this species, Dr. Butler states that the change from summer to winter is produced by the wearing off of the pale buff edgings as well as by growth of colour in the feather itself. With all deference to the author, we are personally of opinion that there is no such thing as growth of colour *in* the feather; the change in this and most of such cases being due to a wearing down of the feather itself, but not merely an abrasion of its edges.

In the article on the Stonechat, he remarks: "When roosting or hopping, its tail is incessantly in motion." We suppose he only refers to its "day roosting," more commonly called perching, as we should imagine that to keep its tail going night and day would be rather trying to any bird.

When writing of the Redstart, Dr. Butler says that he does not believe in the migratory instinct, and "that the true explanation of the so-called migratory instinct is merely another name for short commons." With this we cannot agree; for if that be the case, how does he account for the migration of many young birds long before the summer is over, notably in the case of Richard's Pipit, in which species, according to Herr Gätke, the young migrate before they have lost their down and a considerable time before their parents, who stay to moult? Or, again, does food become scarce in Africa about April, causing birds of all kinds to flock North about the same time? Mr. Stirling's nests of the Black Redstart cannot be taken seriously, for that species has never been known to breed in hedges, but generally in walls or clefts of rocks. It is possible for the bird to have erred in one case (for we know an instance of the Common Redstart breeding on the ground); but reports of the nest of a rare bird being found by the same person in very abnormal situations, in two if not three instances, cannot be believed. Stuff such as this ought to be consigned to the waste-paper basket and not repeated, more especially as Dr. Butler himself does not credit the statement.

The description of the habits of the Blue-throat, although in the main exact, does not really convey a correct idea of its ways. Of course we have not had such an early opportunity of watching it as the late Mr. Seebohm, nor have we seen it on migration as Herr Gätke has; but in the middle of summer had we not seen a shadow that kept disappearing in the willow scrub, or frequently recognised a note not unlike the "chack-chack" of the Robin, we should never have been aware of the presence of this beautiful warbler. This bird is always to be found near a marsh—what spot on the fjelds of Norway does not answer to that description? It is always heard on *dry* spots among short scrub, though hardly ever among trees.

In criticism of the most interesting article on the Nightingale, we have but little to say. No mention is made of the "churr churr" which is the welcome sign of the successful hatching of a brood. The fact of its nesting at some distance from the ground is more common than is generally supposed. A nest was taken in 1894, built in a bush growing against a paling, fully 8 feet from the ground. We don't approve of hand-rearing members of this family; they are much nicer as pets if caught in spring, *before* the arrival of the females, and when so caught will generally sing at once and continue throughout the summer. Should anyone attempt hand-rearing, one of the best foods is fresh wasp grubs, if they can be procured at the right time; we wonder Dr. Butler has made no mention of them.

We heartily re-echo Dr. Butler's sentiments when he states, with reference to the Barred Warbler, "It seems a thousand pities that these rare birds should not be captured alive [or left alone] and their habits in captivity studied in detail. All that can be learnt from the stuffed skin of a Barred Warbler has either long been known or can be equally well studied from skins already in our cabinets; but really to know something of the nature and peculiarities of a bird, it must be studied, not only flying freely in its native home, but in a good sized aviary." It is precisely these notes on their habits in captivity, written, as they are, by one who knows those habits so well, that renders this portion of the book unique and well worthy of a place in every naturalist's library, be he a scientist or a fancier. Dr. Butler shows clearly that the science of aviculture (for it is indeed a science) is just as important to the study of ornithology as other branches of the subject, and a book such as the present tends to do much good in bringing the subjects into closer relation with each other.

Again we would draw the reader's attention to the very sound and sensible remarks on the destruction of birds by man. The whole passage on page 85 is too long to quote, but the last two lines contain the gist of the matter.—"No Act for the protection of wild birds which does not prevent the wholesale grubbing of woods and so-called 'waste land,' will ever prevent the diminution of bird-life in our Islands." Of course it is obvious that a certain amount of drainage of fen land must be done, but there are many parts of England where the wholesale lopping of hedges, or their substitution by a wire fence, might with advantage be stopped. At the same time, we do not mean to imply that no harm is done with net or gun; as several species, notably the Hoopoe, would probably nest in England if unmolested on their spring migration.

No mention is made of a good distinction between the nests of the Chiffchaff and the Willow Wren: namely, the fact that the nests of the former species are always placed on or above the ground, but never *in* it, as is the case with the Willow Wren. In the geographical distribution of this last, no mention is made of its very northern range, nor of its Eastern representative; and in dealing with this very confusing genus, a key to the species might well have been added, especially as some of its members are continually being found on our shores, this season alone having added two, viz., *P. viridanus* and *P. proregulus*.

To describe the Reed Warbler's song as poor is, perhaps, hardly correct. It bears a family likeness to that of the Sedge Warbler; but the bird always seems to be in such a hurry to get it out that the notes become mixed and jumbled up together; nevertheless, in its natural haunt, it sounds distinctly pleasing, though somewhat harsher than that of the Sedge. Although it may require a keen observer to tell the nest of the Sedge Warbler, when suspended, from that of the Reed Warbler, that of the former bird may always be distinguished by its being much shallower.

With regard to Dr. Butler's remarks on the Hedge Sparrow, we cannot agree in any particular except as to their pugnaciousness to their own species. They always sing in a most charming manner, and on being turned into a large aviary always seem to settle down without, apparently, noticing their altered circumstances. In one case, an attachment was formed with a St. Helena Waxbill, the two birds were always about together, and at roosting time the Waxbill would lie as close as possible to his feathered friend.

As regards the systematic position of the Bearded Reedling, the author takes the wisest course in leaving it where it has been; at the same time, his arguments on the subject are very sound and clearly put. The name, "Reedling," which he gives it, is most suitable and by far preferable to the misleading one of Tit; but surely, to be consistent, the Hedge Sparrow should be called an Accentor.

In the article on the Wren, Dr. Butler supports what we have always found to be a popular delusion, namely, the easy way in which it deserts its nest. We have known of a nest, which had had a clutch removed, used again, even though the eggs of the second clutch were removed every day as they were laid. Nevertheless, six eggs were laid, and on some of them being replaced, were successfully hatched and reared. The so-called "cocks' nests" are probably resting-places for the young brood when on the wing.

Dr. Butler slanders the Pipits when he writes of them as pugnacious. The Tree Pipit is certainly most peaceable as long as it is not driven from its accustomed corner. Its song in captivity is also most delightful. We fancy Dr. Butler gets his ideas of a bird's pugnaciousness from its behaviour in a sort of "happy family" aviary. Any Englishman would feel insulted if imprisoned with a Red Indian or a Kaffir, and it is not to be wondered at that an English bird should object to a tropical cousin, such as a Rosa's Parrakeet.

Lastly, it remains for us to notice the illustrations by Mr. Frohawk. The coloured plates of the eggs are good: the eggs being, in most cases, easily recognisable. They have one merit, that of being drawn direct from actual specimens; although too great prominence seems to have been given to differences in shape, while some well-known varieties of common eggs have been omitted, notably, the greenish variety of the Tree Pipit and the pure blue one of the Spotted Flycatcher. The plates are, however, executed in Mr. Frohawk's best style and show the artist to be a keen observer of nature, which, in pictures of this kind, is half the battle. The illustrations are finished off with great care, as is shown by the little sketches in the background: two to which we would especially call attention, being a Thrush on her nest, and the two Bearded Reedlings on a reed. Mr. Frohawk is such a good observer that he cannot draw what he does not see, consequently his attempts at flying birds do not come up to the others, that of the Bearded Reedling and Blue Tit being rather stiff.

All the plates being of such high merit, it would be difficult to give the palm to any particular one, those of the Fieldfare and Tree Creeper being, perhaps, among the best; but to any lover of birds and their ways, be he scientist, aviculturist, or oologist, we can only advise him to get the book and see for himself, and we will guarantee that the money will be well spent.

AVICULTURAL SMALL-TALK.

There has lately been a revival of the controversy as to the harmfulness of the Sparrow, and we are much afraid that the balance of evidence is against our impudent little friend. Most farmers and gardeners are of opinion that he does more harm than good, and although aviculturists have a soft place in their hearts for him, they will probably agree that there are too many Sparrows. After all, a country can only support a certain limited number of birds, and the prolific, pertinaceous, predatory Sparrow takes the place which would otherwise be filled by more useful and interesting species.

In the report of the L. and P. O. Society's Show in our December number the fact of a Half-moon Parrakeet being catalogued as a Golden-crowned Parrakeet is commented upon, and it is remarked that Golden-crowned "Conure" would have been a less misleading title. In justice to Mr. Arthur Jones, the exhibitor of the bird in question, it ought to be known that the misnaming of the bird was not his fault, as he did all in his power to insure accuracy. Mr. Jones sent a description of the bird to a gentleman well known as an authority on Parrots, and was told by him that the bird was a Golden-crowned Parrakeet. It seems that the gentleman alluded to was misled by a singular error in a book to which he referred—the plates of the Golden-crowned Parrakeet and Golden-crowned Conure being transposed in his copy.

Many aviculturists find Alario Finches dreadfully delicate—after a few months they go into a decline from which they never recover, growing gradually weaker till they die. We strongly advise all who may possess these delightful little birds to most carefully avoid giving them any millet seed. If they have access to millet they will often become very fond of it and neglect other seeds. Feed on canary-seed and good German rape, with a few hemp-seeds daily. For this reason it is never wise to endeavour to keep Alario Finches in the same aviary as Waxbills and similar birds, but, on the other hand, they will do well with Canaries. Fed as advised above, Alario Finches will be found fairly hardy.

Before our next number appears the Crystal Palace Bird Show will have come and gone. It is the great event of the year to many, perhaps most, aviculturists, whether they be exhibitors or not. By a large number it is looked forward to eagerly, and looked back upon with pleasure—for at the old Palace of glass, in the chilly month of February, they not only delight their eyes with the sight of rare and beautiful birds, but also renew their acquaintance with many friends of like tastes.

This year the prizes in the Foreign classes at the Palace are raised to the same level as those in the Canary classes. It is a mere act of justice, and ought to have been done years ago—for the entry fee has always been the same in each case. Besides, everyone knows that the British and Foreign Birds are the chief attraction to visitors. We really do not think that any particular credit attaches to the Management for this tardy act of fairness.

The classification has been greatly improved of late years, but we are a little dissappointed that no further advance has been made in the Schedule for 1897. The grouping of Cuba Finches with Gouldian Finches Parrot Finches and Pintailed Nonpareils has always struck us as somewhat strange. The class for Grassfinches, Mannikins and Waxbills sadly wants dividing—of course any division between these groups would have to be a little arbitrary, though the Mannikins, at any rate, are fairly well defined. But it is the Parrot classes which are now most open to criticism. The Love-birds are still, apparently, considered to be neither short-tailed nor long-tailed. Lories and Lorikeets can only be shown singly, but Parrakeets can be shown in pairs. Greys, Amazons, Eclecti, and Cockatoos must be single, while other short-tailed Parrots may be in pairs. And in spite of the correspondence in our columns last spring, the quaint wording which, *apparently*, excludes Macaws, and classes the Slender-billed Cockatoo with the Parrots, is still retained. It would not have been much trouble to remove these anomalies, and it would seem as if some of them are retained out of sheer perverseness.

We have no wish to say any more, at present, about the absence from the Schedule of any definition of that very elastic term "British Bird." But we should like to know the precise meaning intended to be conveyed by the expression "Birds of Passage and Migratory Birds." Are "Birds of Passage" the same as "Migratory Birds," or are they not? From the use of the word "and" it would seem that they are not. Then, are "Birds of Passage and Migratory Birds" included among the British Birds? They would certainly seem not to be so included, but to be placed by themselves in the Schedule as if they were neither British nor Foreign! Truly the Schedule of the Crystal Palace Show is an ornithological conundrum.

Can anyone explain why it is that while birds in cages almost always become infested with insects, in spite of all precautions; yet in aviaries, even quite small aviaries, they are almost entirely free from them? We have for several years had a few cages in our bird-room, and, notwithstanding constant cleansing and shifting of the birds from cage to cage, there are always some insects about the ends of the perches after the birds have been in them for a time. On the other hand, we can never find any traces of these pests in the aviaries in the same room, except behind the nest-boxes in the summer. We have a theory of our own which offers a possible explanation, but we are afraid to make it public until it has been confirmed by further observation.

CORRESPONDENCE.

OPERATIONS ON BIRDS.

SIR,—The account in the November Magazine of an operation performed on a Grey Parrot is very interesting. Only about a week before the November number came into my hands, I performed a similar operation on a Pekin Robin belonging to Lady Margaret Spicer, of Spye Park. Her ladyship brought the bird to me and asked me to look at it. I told her there was a large tumour under the eyelid, and that if she would wait about five or ten minutes, I would take it out. But she said her doctor had looked at and lanced it, and said nothing would come from it. I assured her, if she would take the risk, I had confidence that I could successfully remove it. Her ladyship left the bird with me to do with it as I liked, and called about fifteen minutes afterwards, to see the bird in its cage with its face a natural shape, only the eye (which before was completely closed) being a little weak, and slightly damp from the bathing.

I think many species are very subject to these tumours: Virginian Nightingales and Grey Cardinals frequently get them just over the upper eyelid, probably by dashing the head against the top of the cage when first caught, as all these birds, at the slightest fright, make a dash upwards; but Pekin Robins always throw themselves blindly against the wires of their cage, so the tumour in their case is either just over the bill or between the bill and eye.

If not taking up too much space, I will relate how I first discovered how simple a matter it was to remove one of the tumours. A farm labourer brought me a pure white Thrush (an Albino with pink eyes) which had died, thinking I should like it to stuff. (It was a strange thing that he had had this bird six months and I had never heard of it). He said he caught it as a young nestling, but since he had had it a "big lump" had grown on the top of its head and killed it. I accepted the bird, and, when skinning over its head, I found the skin quite free from any connection with the tumour, and the latter quite free from any adhesion to the skull-bone, coming off the skull about the size of half a pea and of a hard cheesy substance. When the bird was stuffed no one would have noticed that there had been anything the matter with it: but before, its eyelid appeared to be drawn up almost to the crown of its head. Now, it so happened that, at the same time, I had a Grey Cardinal, a very fine bird, with exactly the same complaint, and which I daily expected to die. So I determined, kill or cure, to try the operation. After much persuasion, and a suggestion that she was faint-hearted, I succeeded in getting my wife to securely hold it, while, with the small blade of my penknife, very sharp, I carefully cut just through the skin, right across the centre of the tumour, and, with the point of the knife, parted the skin and uncovered the whole of the tumour, which then easily came away. (But this one appeared as though in two halves, like two chestnuts in a husk). After a minute's bathing with a bit of soft sponge and warm water, I replaced the skin as neatly as possible omitting the sewing-up process, which I have never attempted, and then turned the bird into a large outdoor aviary, where it was not likely to strike its head; two days later it was singing and appeared none the worse, while three weeks later it was V.H.C. at the Crystal Palace Show—so the

operation did not leave much mark. Since then I have never hesitated to cut out these tumours. I simply cut through the thin skin right over the centre, gently work off the skin each way with the point of the knife, take out the cheesy substance, carefully bathe the spot with warm water and a very clean soft sponge, and close up the skin. I cannot advise the sewing-up process unless in skilled hands.

C. P. ARTHUR.

A MANNIKIN HYBRID.

SIR,—I have to record the breeding of a cross between the Bronze Mannikin and Rufous-backed Finch (*Spermestes nigriceps*). There are two of each of these birds in one of my indoor aviaries, and, apparently, neither of them are pairs, as each has taken a mate from the other species; but I am not sure which are males and which are females. I only became aware that one pair had bred when the young bird left the nest.

The nest is in a furze-branch, and was originally built by a pair of Avadavats, with hay and aloe-fibre; it is tubular in shape, with an opening at one end. The Mannikins have not altered it in any way.

The young bird left the nest on the 2nd of January, and began to feed itself about a week later. I found four dead unfledged young on the floor of the aviary about the middle of December, which probably were from the same hatch; they had been overfed and were badly crop-bound, the crops being full of whole white millet.

The colouring of the young bird is: back blackish-brown, head darker, tail black; underneath whitish, throat and breast greyish, beak blackish, legs dark grey, eyes black, iris white; no markings on sides.

I am inclined to think that the Rufous-backed Finch is the hen, as this bird most often feeds the young one. The other pair are now building, and both birds seem to work equally.

I noticed to-day, in one of my open-air aviaries, a Zebra Finch nest and one egg already laid; this seems very early.

With reference to the second paragraph of "Avicultural Small-talk," in last month's number, there is one feature of the Magazine that I have been sorry to see discontinued: I allude to the descriptions of members' aviaries and bird-rooms, which were of the greatest interest. Probably every aviculturist, owing partly to the force of circumstances, keeps his birds under more or less different conditions, and the publication of these varying conditions, with some indication of the accompanying difficulties encountered, would add greatly to our knowledge of how to keep our birds most successfully.

Temperature is an important question, and the amount of insect and other stimulating food given, as compared with the space available for exercise, in the case of hard-billed birds; what species are found to agree together; and many other points would sooner become matters of certainty if we could get a greater number of records of avicultural experiences.

As regards antipathies: I have found the Magpie Mannikins generally very peaceable; but they at once attacked a pair of Striated Finches placed in the same aviary with them; perhaps the similarity of colouring had something to do with it.

R. A. TODD.

CRIMSON-WING PARRAKEETS.

SIR,—In the early part of 1895, my hen Crimson-wing laid two eggs: but I found the old birds did not sit well, the result being that both eggs turned out addled.

Profitting by my experience, and in order to be prepared, should they have eggs next year, I purchased several Doves; and it so happened that a Dove laid an egg the same day as the Crimson-wing in January, 1896. I changed the eggs, and placed the Dove's egg under the Parrakeet and *vice versâ*. I again found the Parrakeet unreliable, so allowed the Doves to continue sitting on the Parrakeet's egg (only one was laid on this occasion) with the ultimate result that the egg was hatched. Unfortunately, the time of the year was against rearing the young one, and the Doves could not feed it although they tried, I believe, very hard, and, as I thought, were succeeding. I did not interfere until the Sunday morning, when I found it dead, although it was alive at twelve o'clock on the Saturday night, it having been hatched on the previous Friday.

I showed both my pairs of Kings and Crimson-wings at the Crystal Palace last year. It was my first attempt at showing, and I was awarded 1st for the Kings and Extra 3rd for the Crimson-wings—the well-deserved reproof from Dr. Simpson, in his article of March last, may explain why the latter did not do better. The hen had laid an egg the day before being sent to the Show, and I can only plead my ignorance in birdy matters for having sent her. As it was, she caught cold and I very nearly lost her, as she parted with a soft egg after a very great deal of trouble. Since then she has recovered, and I am looking forward to trying again to get them to breed, and shall be very grateful for any information concerning either the Crimson-wings or Kings.

I may add that they occupy a cage 23in. by 19in. by 19in. with a breeding box attached, into which is fitted a block of wood hollowed to the centre, so that the eggs will be prevented from rolling about. I have not previously had such a suitable nest-box as I have now, consequently I am a little more sanguine of success.

JOHN DOHERTY.

A CHEAP FOOD FOR INSECTIVOROUS BIRDS.

SIR,—Towards the end of 1896, I received a letter from our member, Mr. Frank Finn, Indian Museum, Calcutta (dated December 9th) as follows: "Dear Sir,—I am sending you, this mail, a pound sample of a dried insect which I think would prove cheaper and more attractive as food for birds than ant cocoons. I have seen it eaten dry, by several species, and am now feeding a Shâma largely on it. You will see that it ought to be just the thing for breeding Finches. Should a demand for it arise, any quantity could, I think, be supplied, as the insect is excessively abundant during a short period each year, and can be collected in handfuls under lamps. You might, if you would, bring this to the notice of the Avicultural Society."

On the 2nd of January, the box arrived and I opened it with interest; I found it filled with a mass of minute insects, about the size of *Aphides*, bright green sometimes varied with black. Close examination proved that they were the perfect insects produced from some form of "cuckoo-spit"

or "spittle insect," belonging, in all probability, to the genus *Iassus*. I was not, however, able to identify the species, as it was not represented in the Natural History Museum. It belongs to the same group of insects as the so-called "dried flies" well-known to aviculturists, but is much smaller and, owing to its green colouring, attracts the attention of the birds more readily than the whity-brown species generally in use.

I found that not only was this insect relished by the American Blue-bird, the Green Cardinal, the *Liotheix* and the Yellow Wagtail, to all of which I offered the insects dry, and unmixed with other food; but that some which I gave to a friend (who is anxious about his Indigo Bunting) were greedily eaten by half-a-dozen Canaries as soon as they were put in a little heap on the floor of the aviary.

I have since mixed them with my usual soft food, and find that all my insectivorous birds have eaten them. If, therefore, these insects can be imported so as to be obtainable at a cheaper rate than ants' cocoons, they would certainly be a great boon to aviculturists.

A. G. BUTLER.

ZOSTEROPS.

[In reply to an enquiry by a member as to what Zosterops are, the following letter was written by Mr. Phillipps.]

These are little birds freely scattered over large portions of the world. Many of the species have a ring of white feathers round the eye, from which they take their name (Zosterops) and also the familiar name of Spectacle-bird usually given to them in this country. Over eighty species are known, but, so far as I have observed, only two have been shown in this country—I may be quite wrong here—an Australian and a Chinese species.

For a few years back, not many appeared, and these were sold at very high prices: consequently the markets are now glutted. On their arrival, they are usually in poor condition and partially naked; but I find that they are easily kept, and with warmth and proper care will come round all right if not too far gone. They are lively little things, and have a cheerful twitter. They require to be always eating, and should always have a supply of food in their cage; during the dark evenings a light should be supplied, so that they may feed up to at least 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. They make a lot of mess in their cage. The most suitable foods for them, according to my experience, are stewed apple sweetened with white castor sugar, biscuit and milk sop, pears, bananas, and a little insectivorous food. Mine were very keen after prepared yolk of egg: but I think it should be given only in moderation. I found them slow in taking to a new food, but when once they commenced on the stewed apple, they wholly deserted the raw. I could never teach my birds to touch grapes.

R. PHILLIPPS.

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

Mr. J. LEWIS BONHOTE, Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire.

Mr. JOHN FROSTICK, 143, Endlesham Road, Balham, S.W.

MEMBERS DECEASED.

On the 30th of October, 1896, at Dunburgh Hill, Beccles, Suffolk, ROBERT DASHWOOD, J.P., in his 91st year.

On the 21st of December, 1896, at Middleton Hall, King's Lynn, the Honourable MARIQUITA MILLES.

MEMBERS' SALE AND EXCHANGE COLUMN.

The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 6 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable.*

A strong hen Green Cardinal, been in England two winters, 18/-.
Miss M. SHARP, Ringwood, Hants.

Fine male Bengal Parrakeet, now in outdoor aviary. What offers? Cash or exchange. G. L. GRACE, 24, Wood Street, Wakefield.

Budgerigars, aviary-bred, perfect plumage and selected for breeding, pairs 9/-, satisfaction guaranteed.—J. C. POOL, Carr's Lane, Birmingham.

Australian Peaceful Doves, 7/- pair; Australian Crested Brown-wing Doves, 13/- pair; Diamond Doves, 10/6 pair—have bred young, '96.
J. B. HOUSDEN, Brooklyn, Cator Road, Sydenham.

Am now disposing temporarily of most of my birds, all in very best condition—Swainson's Lorikeet, best of pair that took 1st and Special, Worthing, 30/-; pair Green Singing-finches, 3rd Worthing, 10/-, pair Saffron-finches, 4th Worthing, 8/-; Diamond Dove, sex unknown, 7/-; two cock Passerine Parrakeets (Bluewings) 4/- each; very fine pair imported Cockatiels, now out of doors, 14/6; two Vinaceous Turtle Doves, believed to be a pair, aviary-bred, 15/-; pair Java Sparrows, now in outdoor aviary, 4/-; cock Canary, good songster, 5/-; pair Linnets, caught 1895, 2/6; pair Bullfinches, 5/-. The lot for £5.
D. SETH-SMITH, Wilford House, Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone.

Rock Parrot, fine plumage, good talker, whistles "Pop goes the weasel," £2 2s.; Brazilian Bullfinch or Collard Finch, Show plumage, full song, 7/6; Dark-crested Norwich cock Canary, fine bird, full song, 1895, 7/6; cock Linnet, mule, rich colour, long bird, 10/-.
S. BURGE, Ivy Cottage, Fairford.

Hardy Budgerigars, bred in garden aviary, sex guaranteed, 7/6 pair; ditto, fine adult birds, 9/- pair; cock Zebra Finch, Show condition, 2/6; Ring-necked Parrakeet, grand specimen, 12 months in garden aviary, 10/-; beautiful pair Grey Java Sparrows, 3/6; hen Gouldian Finch, thoroughly healthy, 10/-; Red-crested Cardinal, fit for Show, 5/-. Rush nests for foreign finches and Waxbills, 5d., 4/6 dozen.
C. P. ARTHUR, Melksham.

Pairs aviary-bred Budgerigars in good condition, price 6/6 pair.
N. H. JONES, Bridlington.

WANTS.

(These are charged for at the same rate as birds for sale).

Pair of Red-rump Parrakeets. NORMAN H. JONES, Bridlington.

R. MASCHKE, 293, UPPER ST., ISLINGTON, N.

For abbreviations, see No. 25.—Mealworms, 6/6 lb., 9/- quart; ants'-eggs, hand picked, 5/-, ordinary, 2/3; dried yolk, 5/-; poppy meal, 6d. lb.; fluid for making sweet cheese (splendid for insectivorous birds, tanagers, finches, etc.) sample bottle, 1/-; hemp crusher, 3/6.

PAIRS: Adult, extremely large yellow-faced budgerigars, about 10in. long, 12/6, 9in. 10/6, 8in. 8/6; ff blue robins, c3m, 12/6; ff liothrix, 6/6; ff scarlet tanagers, ff desert-bullfinches, 40/-; pin-tailed nonpareils, c2m, Madagascar bearded seed-eaters, 15/6; green cardinals, black-tailed hawfinches, 20/-; white rice-birds, 10/6; Madagascar love-birds, 3/6, peach-faced 40/-; various Senegal finches, 3/-; diamond doves, ff Manilla doves, 15/-; ff rosellas, 30/-.

SINGLE: Female Cal. quails, 12/6; male liothrix, in song, 4/6; ff rock mynahs, ff Chinese crested mynahs, 15/-; combassou, Baya weavers, Russ' weavers, all c, grey singing-finch, female white-throated finch, pin-tailed whydah, 5/-; ff superb tanager, 40/-; red cardinals, 9/6; ff grand eclectus, 25/-; ff Nosicus cockatoo, 12/6; Swainson's lorikeet, 20/-; woodlarks in song, 5/-; blackcaps, 7/6; titlarks, 5/-; thrushes, blackbirds, c2y, 10/-; ff serin-finch, 7/6; ff siskins, 3/6; knots, 3/-; herring-gulls, 5/-. The very best Hartz Mountain hollow-roller canaries, 15/-, females, 2/6. 1,000 testimonials on Hartz canaries, etc., on application. R. MASCHKE has been breeding canaries many years in St. Andreasberg, Hartz Mountains, and has been successful at 33 Continental leading shows for the song of his canaries.

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THE

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BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. III.—No. 29. *All rights reserved* MARCH, 1897.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to Members monthly.

Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them. Dead birds cannot be received for identification or *post mortem* examination, on account of the risk of infection.

Bound Volumes of Vol. I. of the *Avicultural Magazine* can be obtained from the Secretary, price 15/6; there are only a very few copies remaining. Bound copies of Vol. II. are now ready, price 6/- to members, 7/6 to non-members. Most of the monthly parts of Vols. I. and II. can still be obtained from the Secretary, unbound, price 6d. each; but No. 2 (December, 1894) and No. 4 (February, 1895), are out of print.

The plate issued with this number of the Magazine, representing the Ornamented Lorikeet, is from a drawing by Mr. FROHAWK of a bird belonging to Mr. C. T. MAXWELL. This plate is the first of a series of three to be issued this year (all from Mr. FROHAWK'S drawings) and which are supplied to members hand-coloured on payment of 1/6 extra for the three. The second will appear in May or June, and the third in August.

NEW MEMBERS.

Mr. CHARLES HOULTON, Denton's Green Lane, St. Helen's.
Miss M. A. BLAND, Kassassin, Auckland Road, Upper Norwood.
Mrs. D'EVNCOURT CHAMBERLAIN, Connaught, St. John's Wood Road, Bournemouth.
Mr. J. L. FLINT, 9, Donnington Square, Newbury.
Mrs. KEENE, 11, Queen's Gate, South Kensington, S.W.
Dr. J. D. WILLIAMS, 65, Partridge Road, Cardiff.
Mr. FRANK COOKE, Sunny Mount, Lincoln.
Dr. G. H. OLIVER, Clayton, Bradford.
Miss CONSTANCE PHILLPOTTS, 38, Lansdowne Street, Hove.
Miss K. HOLMES, 38, Lansdowne Street, Hove.

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Mr. ARTHUR WILLIAM ARROWSMITH, Brunswick Pier-Hotel, Blackwall, E.
Proposed by Mr. MARSHALL.

Mr. W. BUTTON, The Nursery, Corsham, Wilts.
Proposed by Mr. ARTHUR.

Mrs. K. SHERBROOKE, Keldholme Priory, Kirbymoorside, Yorkshire.
Proposed by Mr. ST. QUINTIN.

Mr. F. C. HOPSON, Northbrook Street, Newbury.
Proposed by Mr. FLINT.

Mr. EUSTACE F. BOSANQUET, Steeple Ashton House, Trowbridge.
Proposed by Mr. SETH-SMITH.

Miss HOWMAN, 78, Weston Hill, Sydenham.
Proposed by the Hon. and Rev. F. G. DUTTON.

Mrs APPLEFORD, West Hill House, Hoddesdon, Herts.
Proposed by Mr. FILLMER.

(Continued on page 3 of cover).



ORNAMENTED LORIKEET. (¾ Nat. size.)

(*Trichoglossus ornatus.*)

THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. III.—No. 29. *All rights reserved.* MARCH, 1897.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS CALCUTTA

THE ORNAMENTED LORIKEET.

Trichoglossus ornatus.

By C. S. Simpson.

There are, I suppose, few aviculturists who have not at some time or another been fascinated by the splendid beauty of some species of *Trichoglossus* seen, perchance, at a Show or in a dealer's shop. Some, doubtless, have purchased such birds, only to find that the attention required to keep them clean and healthy was too great for their patience: others, more cautious, have taken the precaution of referring to some popular work on aviculture and have read so forbidding an account of the delicacy, the uncleanliness, and the difficulty of feeding Lorikeets, that they have then and there forsworn the care of such birds.

And yet, of a truth, Lorikeets are by no means specially troublesome to attend to, provided that suitable surroundings can be given them. I willingly grant that under unsuitable conditions no birds are more troublesome and unsatisfactory to the aviculturist.

Those members of the Avicultural Society who have kept Ornamented Lorikeets will readily, I believe, endorse the above remarks. An Ornamented Lorikeet kept under unsuitable conditions, that is, kept separately in a small cage, is a miserable creature capable of affording but little pleasure to its owner; but a *pair* of the species, kept in a moderately large aviary, are things of beauty and a joy for ever.

The name of "Ornamented Lorikeet" was given to this bird by Dr. Russ, in accordance with its Latin name, and a fairly good description of the bird is given in that author's "Speaking Parrots," though he does not appear to have had personal experience of it. "It is," he tells us, "a native of Celebes, and the Togian Islands. Dr. A. B. Meyer found it there in abundance and sometimes in very large flocks, which flew away with rapid

strokes of the wing, uttering short shrill cries. The natives keep them in numbers, chained to a little stand before the doors of their huts by means of a ring made of cocoa-nut shell, and feed them with rice and bananas. The above-named explorer informs us that this bird has a perceptible and not unpleasant smell of musk."

My first Ornamented Lorikeet was obtained three years ago, and, as I had no aviary available at the time, was kept in an ordinary square parrot-cage. I soon came to the conclusion that this species is not suited to cage life. My bird was not wild (on the contrary, he was a bold and fearless bird, though excitable) but his movements were rapid and sudden, and he constantly injured his plumage against the wires: he was restless and active, always wanting to fly, and would start from his perch with a strong "whirrh" of the wings, only to be brought up in a few inches by the bars of his prison. And, like all caged Lorikeets, he was a dirty bird, and his cage required constant attention to keep it even fairly sweet.

After a time, he was transferred to a small aviary in company with half-a-dozen other Parrakeets. Here he was happy enough, and soon reduced his comrades to a very submissive condition, but he was of an interfering and jealous disposition and could never leave any female Parrakeet alone. Constant squabbles were the result, and in these he was invariably victorious. Failing to obtain a bride of his own species, he was eventually satisfied with a hen Purple-capped Lory, for whom he manifested the greatest affection and with whom for a time he was happy enough.

In the Autumn of 1895, my friend Mr. W. H. Betts offered to lend me a female Ornamented Lorikeet in order that I might attempt to breed the species. I need hardly say that the offer was gladly accepted; an aviary was prepared for the reception of the pair and they were duly introduced, the Purple-capped Lory being relegated to a cage in the same room. The aviary which I gave them was about ten feet by three, and nine feet high—small in comparison with some of those described by contributors to the Magazine, but large enough to afford the Lorikeets an opportunity of stretching their wings. Their delight on acquiring this moderate degree of freedom was intense, and their activity was marvellous: from morning to night they were in constant movement, chasing each other from bough to bough, whirring with their strong rapid flight from end to end of their domain, hopping with quaint sidelong jumps

on the floor, and occasionally occupying a short period of comparative repose by performing each others' toilet. They frequently bathed, soaking themselves until they were unable to fly. Kept thus, no birds could have been less troublesome than the Ornamented Lorikeets: a very simple diet sufficed to keep them in splendid health, and with a good layer of sawdust on the floor, a weekly cleaning was all that the aviary required. Their diet consisted of canary and hemp-seed (which they took readily), a saucer of bread and milk every morning, and a piece of banana or other fruit later in the day. The male bird was bold, and would fly on to the food-saucer and help himself while I held it, but he showed no liking for human society and would never allow familiarities; the hen was shyer.

On the approach of Spring, the male bird's attentions to his lady became marked and demonstrative: he constantly drove her about the aviary, and, for a time, she would fly from him, then, relenting, would rest tranquilly on a bough, while he performed the most grotesque antics which she, doubtless, thought charming. His love-making consisted of a peculiar dance, or rather a series of jerky movements of the head and body, puffing out his body feathers, putting out his tongue, and uttering various clucking and hissing noises. During the time of courtship he would never, if he could prevent it, allow the hen to feed herself. Whenever she tried to reach the food-vessels he drove her away, and after helping himself called her to him and fed her with regurgitated food. I watched them closely, and I believe, for days together, the hen received nothing but what the cock gave her; but as she remained plump and well, there seemed no reason for interference.

When I thought the pair ready to nest, I provided them with a small barrel artistically covered with bark, hung rather high and secluded by surrounding branches. They at once set to work on this, pulled off every atom of bark, and bit every twig off the surrounding boughs. They took possession of the barrel and spent much of their time scuffling about inside it: the hen always spent the night in it, the cock usually roosting on the top or in the entrance-hole.

To my great disappointment, they never got any further than this: both birds were in splendid health and condition, they paired, and during the whole of the Summer appeared to be on the point of nesting, but no eggs were laid, and on the approach of Autumn their manifestations of affection became less demonstrative, though they still appeared greatly attached to each other.

Mr. Frohawk's beautiful plate renders a detailed description of the plumage unnecessary: the distinction between the sexes is not such as could be represented in an illustration, though I could always easily recognise the female by the slightly narrower skull and the generally more effeminate (I can think of no better word) appearance.

Until the last two or three years, the Ornamented Lorikeet was a very rare bird indeed, but a considerable number were imported in 1895, and since then they have been comparatively common.

CRYSTAL PALACE SHOW, 1897.
BRITISH BIRDS (OMITTING CLASSES 92-95 & 99.)

By J. Lewis Bonhote.

The Palace Show this year cannot be said to differ much from its predecessors. In the actual number of exhibits there was a slight falling off, but the quality was quite up to the usual standard. The pick of the show, as far as British Birds are concerned, was a Long-tailed Tit, exhibited by Mr. Fulljames. It was a nice bird in good trim, and anyone who has kept, or attempted to keep, British Birds knows the difficulty that has to be overcome with such birds; it ought undoubtedly to have taken first. Again let me protest, as I did last year, against distinctive marks on the cages, such as instructions for feeding (in one or two cases with initials), or a peculiar printed label stating the name of the bird. I do not wish to imply for a moment that these marks are placed there for any but legitimate purposes; but all exhibitors must realise that it opens a high road to collusion between judge and exhibitor. Another point was that the hall was kept at rather too high a temperature; this may be hard to regulate, but it ought to be possible; as it was, at least one bird succumbed to the effects, while several others had to be removed.

The judging, as usual, presented the customary formalities and freaks. Looking at the awards, one would be apt to imagine that the judge did not know what the typical Linnet or Siskin was like. However, let us take the classes in order and examine the facts, which are stubborn things and more stable than their opinions. The Bullfinches were a large class and contained many birds of high merit. There was the usual sprinkling of small foreigners, most of which were rightly ignored; 1,368, 1st, was a splendid specimen, good in every way and well worth its place; 1,344, 2nd, was a nice sized bird, but had no colour,

and its left leg had at one time been broken; 1,346, 3rd, was a very good bird, but I should call it a small foreigner; it is of course a matter on which one cannot be quite certain, and I have no doubt the judge drew his conclusions carefully before awarding it a prize; 1,341, was a specially fine bird and ought to have been noticed.

Class 85 (Goldfinches) was a very strong class, almost all the birds being of high merit, and the judging, which can have been no easy task, was creditably done.

Class 86 (Chaffinches) was a small class; only two approached a typical bird, namely 1,444, which was 3rd, its only fault being that it was wild, and 1,450, which was unnoticed. *All* the rest were far too dark and deserved no notice whatever.

Class 87 (Linnets) was a large class, but it ought not to have been hard to judge; 1,470, 2nd, was by far the best; 1,497, 3rd, being also a good bird; while the next best was 1,468, H.C.; 1,479, 1st, was very dark and as unlike the typical wild Linnet as a Mealy Redpoll.

Class 88 (Redpolls). At the beginning of the catalogue I read "Preference in judging will be given to cage-moulted specimens." In accordance (?) with this rule the *one* bird in this class *not* cage-moulted takes first. There were also several beautiful Lesser Redpolls, *all* of which were unnoticed. The best bird in the class was 1,512, though it may possibly have been colour-fed; 1,510, 2nd, was the next best.

Class 89 (Siskins). The prizes all went to colour-fed birds. Whatever may be said to the contrary, I feel sure that this is a wrong system; the only standard we can take by which to judge a British Bird is that of its wild brethren, who never assume the beautiful (?) colour of 1,517 and 1,518, the first and second. The best bird in the class was 1,527.

Again there is a "boom" in Skylarks, which were well represented this year; 1,537, 2nd, was the best, being a fine slim upstanding bird, while 1,542 ought to have been second.

Class 91 (Robins) was a good class; 1,552, 1st, being a specially fine bird, next to him I preferred 1,547.

The Hybrid Class (No. 96) brought forth nothing very striking, most of them being Bullfinch-Goldfinch or Bullfinch-Linnet. Among the others were Greenfinch-Linnet, Twite-Linnet, Goldfinch-Greenfinch, wild bred; and a Siskin-Redpoll, Greenfinch-Bullfinch, artificially produced. First went to a fine Linnet-Bullfinch; 2nd, to a Bullfinch-Goldfinch; and 3rd, to a

colour-fed Bullfinch - Linnet, at least I believe that to have been its parentage, it was stained almost beyond recognition.

Class 97 (Albinos). First went to the usual White Blackbird, as this is the only true Albino shown it deserved its place, but to give 1,630 fourth because it had a few white feathers in it is quite another story. Next to Sparrows, Blackbirds become pied more commonly than any other species; 1,631, a White Chaffinch, if such it be, ought to have been second, to me the beak seemed to be too obtuse, and I fancy I detected some Canary yellow about it; 1,632 was a beautiful Redpoll of a light chocolate colour all over, and 1,636, second, a nice fawn-coloured Starling. The class also included a Cinnamon Robin, third; a White Sparrow and two Cinnamon Greenfinches.

On first reaching the A.O.V. Class I at once began to wonder how many anomalies I should find, and truly in this show the judges seem to have surpassed themselves (if possible). The first bird I looked at was a Brambling, which was in its wrong class, but unnoticed, good! 1,643 was a fine Ortolan Bunting, a thorough *migratory* bird, getting V.H.C. in the *resident* class. Next came three Bramblings, all unnoticed, and I began to give the judge credit for knowing the habits of one of our commonest British Birds, when alas! a few cages further on was a Brambling getting V.H.C., and the judge's ignorance was displayed. I was glad to see this year that Grey Wagtails in the A.O.V. (resident) were noticed, and the second prize bird was a beauty. This is in any case a move in the right direction, for last year they were *all* disqualified.

In Class 99 the judging was all right, two birds in the wrong class being unnoticed.

Let us now look at the A.O.V. (migratory): 1,693 was a very nice *non*-migratory bird, the Stonechat; it is, of course, awarded V.H.C.!!! 1,694, a Brambling in its right class gets V.H.C. The judge evidently forgot he had already noticed it in the non-migratory class. How can a bird be a *resident* and a *migrant* at the same time? An answer will oblige!! 1,695 was a Swallow in very bad condition, but it is, or rather has been, a Swallow, and that is sufficient to give it V.H.C.!!! 1,698, a Grey Wagtail in its wrong class takes V.H.C., but the judge rightly considers it a resident bird, how then can it be a migrant? Will someone enlighten me? The judge must (?) be right!!!! The rest of the class was chiefly composed of Redstarts, some of very high merit, a fine Wheatear, two or three Ring Ouzels, and a very fine Red-backed Shrike. The first prize bird, a Redstart,

holds the distinction of being among the worst in its class, very dark in colour, and rather wild; 1,711 (V.H.C.) was the best Redstart there. A Redwing, not a very good one, was unnoticed, as of course our good friend the Waxwing, and, needless to say, a Cornerake. A Crossbill in its wrong class was, however, worthy of a card.

So much for the judging, now for the birds. In Class 98 A.O.V. (small), Mr. Galloway's Goldcrest takes first, and great credit is due to that gentleman for having kept it so long; it looked rather "thick" and sat with its head under its wing, and I should therefore have placed it third; 2nd was, as stated above, a splendid Grey Wagtail, and 3rd a Long-tailed Tit in very fine trim, which ought, undoubtedly, to have taken premier honours; 1,641 was a nice Meadow Pipit and 1,659 a good Blue Tit.

One word about Class 99, which is in better hands than mine. Birds of prey are excluded, but a bird larger than most of our British Birds of prey, feeding solely on raw meat, takes first prize. Another conundrum!

The Nightingale and Blackcap class was not very remarkable. The first prize went to a moderately good Nightingale; 2nd, to another Nightingale, badly shown and in bad feather; 3rd, to a very large and good bird, the best Nightingale; while the best bird in the class was a very fine Blackcap (No. 1,689) which got V.H.C.

THE LARGER BRITISH AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

By Thomas Marshall.

This department of the 1897 Ornithological Revel at the Crystal Palace having been allotted to me, I snatched what time I could from the usual round of handshaking and social reunion which this event annually brings about to jot down a few notes anent the exhibits in Classes 92, 93, 94, 95, and 99.

Commencing with the Blackbirds, I found much to admire in the class, the first prize bird (1,560) being a very fine specimen with wonderfully good bill and eye-cere. The owner of this bird is to be congratulated on getting both size and quality, a by no means common combination in a male Blackbird. The other birds in this class do not call for further comment excepting 1,558, which, for so young a bird, had a remarkably deep-coloured bill.

The twenty Song Thrushes forming the next class were an ordinary lot. The first prize went to the biggest bird (1,575), but to my mind the best bird in the class was 1,574, a young and very stylish bird, nicely spotted, and undoubtedly a male, which I

could not say of the winner. I have never been able to understand old scaly-legged Thrushes beating young clean-legged birds, other things, except mere size, being equal; nor should fat dumpy Thrushes be preferred to the slim and reachy sort, all too seldom seen on the show bench. I have often compared the one to a cart horse and the other to a thoroughbred, and I do not consider the simile too far fetched. The third prize went to an erstwhile inmate of my own bird-room, whose show days I considered over when I presented him to his present owner nearly twelve months ago. No. 1,585 (V.H.C.) was a very light and stylish bird, and was certainly better marked than 1,586, which took fourth prize. The owner of 1,571 evidently wished it to be understood that sopped bread and crushed hemp seed was an ideal food for Thrushes, for he expressly stipulated that his bird was to be so fed, poor bird.

Class 94 was the Starlings, not the least interesting of which was Mr. Fulljames' well-known bird, which had a word for any visitor who cared to speak to it. What he said I am unable to record, but he appeared to mean well. Mere intelligence, however, does not win honours at the Palace, and this loquacious bird had to be content with third prize. The old adage that fine feathers do not make fine birds does not hold good at bird shows, however, and 1,595 and 1,592, the first and second prizes, deserved their respective positions, 1,595 being a beautifully lustrous specimen.

The winner of the first prize in the next class was the well-known Magpie "Victor" (1,604). This bird was in superb condition and clearly deserved first honours. In awarding the other prizes, however, the judge seems to have felt it desirable to give a prize to one of each sort in the class, accordingly he gave second to a Jay (1,606) with a bad wing and a frayed tail; and third to a Jackdaw (1,598) in by no means good feather. There were other birds in this class which for condition alone beat it by many points, notably 1,600, a Magpie, which, had it not been shown in a wicker cage, must have commanded higher honour than the V.H.C. awarded to it.

The Missel Thrushes in Class 99 were very good specimens, especially 1,663, which was a very steady bird in grand condition and nicely marked; why it should have been called upon to play second fiddle to the Raven (1,672), which, by the way, had a deformed claw, is a matter for conjecture; and I must say a good word for 1,664, a well-marked cage-moulted Fieldfare, which deserved a card, but was unnoticed.

I will conclude by saying that the feeding of the birds in the classes I have discussed was simply disgraceful. I am quite sure that to many an insectivorous bird at this show it was a week of starvation, not because food was not given them, but because they would prefer death to eating the atrocious mixture of pea-meal, fat, and treacle provided for their delectation.

FOREIGN FINCHES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

By A. G. Butler.

This year's show of Foreign Birds was, in my opinion, vastly superior to that of 1896, and I only regretted that I had not secured two holidays instead of one, in which I could do justice to them; the fact being that so many aviculturists were present, some of whom I then made the acquaintance of for the first time, that I really had but little leisure in which to study the finches.

At the opening of the show the light was so bad that the smaller birds looked pretty nearly all one colour, and therefore the quietest time was lost in examining birds which were large enough to be recognised: later, however, either the light improved or my eyes became accustomed to the semi-darkness of the tent, so that I was able to commence the examination of Class 103.

The first question which arose respecting the two Parrot Finches to which first prize was awarded was as to whether a hen bird, however old, ever attained to the brilliant colouring of either of these specimens. In my own mind I must confess that I decided against the possibility and concluded that they were both cocks: an undoubted pair shown by Mr. Osbaldeston, should, I think, have taken precedence, although the cock was less brilliant, and the hen had evidently not by any means attained her full colouring.

Mr. Maxwell's Pin-tailed Nonpareils appeared to be a good pair; but, without lifting up the cage and turning it towards the end of the tent (which I did not venture to do) I could not see them distinctly.

As regards the Gouldian Finches, I considered none of them very remarkable, but the condition of Mrs. Wickin's pair being finer than that of the single Red-headed male to which the third prize was awarded, personally I should have preferred the Black-heads.

Class 104. Among the Java Sparrows, Mr. Oakey's pair of white birds was very pure and perhaps deserved its position, but I noticed that one of them (apparently the female) had lost a

good many feathers from one side of the body in a patch: this would have been considered a serious blemish in the eyes of some judges and should certainly, if possible, be avoided by exhibitors of white birds; Mr. Smith's pair well deserved the second place. I was amused to see that the low price which I put upon my pied birds caused them to be snapped up quite early in the day.

Class 105. In the Class for Weavers and Whydahs, our friend Mr. Fulljames, who seems to make a speciality of these birds, had things pretty much to himself: his Long-tailed Whydah was in good form and clean; though, being a young bird, it has not yet attained its full colouring. Mr. Housden's birds were more matured in colouring, but almost too recently imported to stand a chance of winning against the more perfect and cleaner bird; next year they may prove dangerous opponents. Mr. Fulljames' Crimson-banded Whydah was a healthy young bird; curiously enough only just coming into breeding plumage, at this season, when most Whydahs have either just lost or are beginning to lose their summer dress: his Yellow-shouldered Whydah and Taha Weaver were both good examples of interesting species.

Class 106. This was a very good class, in which Mr. Fulljames again figured largely: his Australian Fire-finches were a very nice pair, and I was sorry to see that the hen looked out of sorts; I hope she may have recovered later in the day; his Cordon Bleus and Rufous-backed Mannikins were also in excellent form, as also were Mr. Housden's Red-headed Finches, as nice a pair as I have seen. Mr. Maxwell's birds were all very good, but few persons present could recognise Dufresne's Waxbills under the fearful misprint of "Drefree's"; Mr. Watson's Rufous-tailed Grass-finches were not a bad pair by any means; but—the gem of the class, and well worthy of a double first, was Mr. Castellan's charming male Violet-eared Waxbill. May we all some day have many such!

The two next classes always irritate me; they have no business amongst our tropical pets; they are a vain repetition of British species in the Foreign section of the show, and ought to be classed as 84A Continental examples, 85A Continental examples. I did not at all approve of the judging of the Gold-finches; all the prize birds were very steady, but extremely dull in colour, almost as dull as hens. The wildest bird in the class was far and away the best bird, and, should it live to grow tame, will doubtless carry off all the firsts in future years. It was

exhibited by Dr. Frederic Dale, and is, without exception, the most brightly and distinctly marked Goldfinch I ever saw, with a pure white band on the nape where other birds have a blurred whitish bar. The Bullfinches, which are far more difficult to judge, were, I think, well treated.

Class 109. I was delighted to see that Mr. Davis' Thick-billed Cardinal occupied the place of honour this year. Mr. Osbaldeston's Virginian Cardinal doubtless deserved the second place and got it; but it was by no means the brightest specimen of the species which I have seen. Mr Housden's Popes took third; they were not a bad pair, though he has had brighter specimens.

Class 110. I was much charmed with Mr. Humphrys' Trumpeter Bullfinches which rightly took first; Mr. Ball's Nonpareil was not a bad example of a cage-moulted bird, but I should have given precedence to Mr. Housden's much rarer Grosbeak (No. 1855). Mr. Maxwell's Black-headed Siskin was in grand condition and made the successful winner of last year look rather dowdy, whilst his Blue Grosbeak, in spite of its being a little abraded about the base of the beak and elsewhere, was a lovely bird and a treat to look at. Mr. Ball's Indigo-bird must, I think, have been forced into its colour before its time, but it looked well and happy.

INSECTIVOROUS FOREIGN BIRDS AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

By D. Seth-Smith.

The Crystal Palace Bird Show of 1897, the greatest event of avicultural interest of the year, has come and gone, and to lovers of foreign birds it will long be remembered as the finest show that has been held for many a day. When looking around a show like the one that has just gone by, one cannot help realizing that aviculture, although still in its youth, is indeed growing apace, thanks, in a great measure, to those in whose minds the happy idea originated of forming a society devoted entirely to this delightful science.

It was very pleasant to meet several old friends, and to be introduced to others whose names one has long known, almost as well as one's own, although never before having had the pleasure of an introduction.

The three classes for insectivorous and fruit-eating birds contained some of the rarest and most interesting birds in

the show; many, indeed, were entirely new to many aviculturists present, whilst one looked in vain for some old friends: where are the pretty little Red-sided Tits? Gone, I fear, to their happy hunting grounds, after a brief stay amongst us, perhaps to be seen again no more for many years to come.

Class 112 (Any species of Tanager or Bulbul) contained twenty-one entries, all of which showed up, although, unfortunately, the best bird should have been elsewhere. This little gem, catalogued as *Dacnis cayana*, is, I believe, the female Yellow-winged Sugar-bird, perhaps more correctly named *Coereba cyanea*. Although exceedingly rare in this country, I believe examples of the female have occasionally been exhibited in the Zoological Gardens, where there are now some specimens of the male, a glorious little creature of brilliant shades of blue and black. It is a South American species. The specimen exhibited by Mr. Fulljames received the special prize for the best foreign bird in the show.

The first prize in this class was awarded to Mr. Russell Humphrys for a very perfect Blue-winged Honeysucker. Mr. Osbaldeston received the second, for his Superb Tanager, and a truly superb specimen it was, without a fault, apparently. A nice Green Malabar Honeysucker, belonging to Mr. Maxwell, received the third prize. Perhaps in somewhat less perfect plumage than its Blue-winged cousins, this was, nevertheless, a very good bird. A Violet Tanager belonging to the same exhibitor as the last was well worth the fourth prize which it received. Prominent in this class was a very fine pair of (V.H.C.) White-eared Bulbuls; by the way, the males of this species are, I am told, excellent songsters. Mr. Housden's Red-vented Bulbul was the survivor of last year's first prize pair: this bird was awarded a V.H.C. card. There were no less than five Scarlet Tanagers, each of which received V.H.C. A very nice Black Tanager was Highly Commended.

Class 113 (Any species of Crow, Jay, Magpie, Starling, or Mynah). There were here eleven entries, all very good birds. Mr. Humphrys' Black-throated Grakle made a good first-prize winner, and certainly appeared to be very proud of his achievement, for he was for ever chattering, and puffing out his feathers and spreading his tail. He is a beautiful bird, but his incessant cries and chatter must become somewhat monotonous after a time.

A Purple-headed Glossy Starling, belonging to Mr. H. B. Smith, received the second prize; the third going to Mr.

Arthur's grand Mexican Jay. Mr. Maxwell's Long-tailed Glossy Starling was fourth: it had a somewhat rough tail; but the difficulty of keeping birds with such long tails in perfect feather in cages is very great, and the judge probably considered this point before awarding the prize.

There were other good birds in this class, but with the above rarer species to compete against, they had to take a back seat. There were two Green Glossy Starlings, each of which received V.H.C.; a pair of common Brown Mynahs (H.C.); a pair of the somewhat uninteresting Military Troupials (V.H.C.); a Black-backed Piping Crow (H.C.); and a female Black Tanager, which was, apparently, not noticed by the judge, for it should have been marked "Wrong Class." I was sorry not to see either species of Hill Mynah represented here.

Class 114 (Any species of insectivorous or fruit eating bird not previously mentioned). This was a grand class and consisted of no less than thirty entries, four of which were, however, absent, whilst a fifth should have been elsewhere.

Mr. Humphrys again carried off the palm in this class, his beautiful Garrulous Honey-eaters being easily first. It will be remembered that a full account of these rare birds, written by their fortunate owner, appeared in No. 26 of this Magazine. They are certainly delightful birds, and were, moreover, seen to the best advantage in their very roomy cage. With reference to cages, of course those exhibitors who live but a short way from the Palace have a distinct advantage over those who live at a distance and have to trust their birds to the tender mercies of railway porters. The former can afford to show their birds in large roomy cages, whereas, to the latter, the carriage by rail would be no small item of expense.

Mrs. Henderson well deserved the second prize for a very good specimen of the somewhat rare Lettered Aracari. The third prize went to Mr. Humphrys' Australian Bell-bird, an exceedingly pretty creature. A Yellow-tufted Honey-eater, sent by the same gentleman as the last, was, like all his exhibits, well shown and in perfect condition, and worthy of more than V.H.C., but it had to stand aside for Mr. Osbaldeston's Green-billed Toucan: a grand bird, which received the fourth prize. An Ariel Toucan, belonging to the same gentleman, received V.H.C. Two pairs of Zosterops were exhibited, and a very nice Waxwing (H.C.) of which species, by the way, there was an example in a British class. Mr. Fulljames' beautiful Shâma (V.H.C.) was the only representative of this very delightful species.

There were three Brazilian Hangnests, all good birds. Mr. Fulljames' Blue Robins were a very nice pair, and a single bird of the same species, belonging to Mr. Ball, was equally good. Two good pairs of Pekin Robins were shown; but, poor little chaps! they stood no chance of a card in such a class. There was a very nice Dyal-bird (V.H.C.) shown by Mr. Maxwell. This bird is said to be one of the most delightful and intelligent of cage-birds, and it is a great pity that it should not be more often imported. A very good (V. H. C.) Mocking Bird was exhibited by Mr. H. Phillips, and a (wrong class) Glossy Starling was sent by Mr. Swaysland. Mr. Housden's Blue-cheeked Barbet (V.H.C.) was a very nice bird, the survivor of a pair exhibited last year. Two Golden Orioles were shown by Mr. Babb, but in a miserable cage and without tails they looked anything but attractive objects: they were catalogued as "nestlings," but what constitutes a nestling? These birds were certainly wearing their adult plumage, in fact, had worn it nearly all away. I might mention here, with reference to the question as to whether this species should be considered "British" or not, that I remember years ago my father telling me of a pair of Golden Orioles which took up their abode one summer in our garden in Surrey: they were, of course strictly protected by him, and although a nest was never discovered, it was evident, by the movements of the birds, that they had a nest somewhere in the grounds.

A Pectoral Rail (not Pectral or Pectorial, please) with a somewhat rough tail, and a very good Chinese Jay-thrush (V.H.C.) complete the somewhat long list of non-seed-eaters.

On the whole, the show was a grand one, and worth going a long way to see.

PARROTS AT THE PALACE, 1897.

By C. S. Simpson.

These notes were taken at the end of a very tiring day's work of judging, and in a bad light, so I must ask the indulgence of my readers if they be found in any detail inaccurate.

The Parrot classes were, in every case, well filled, and the majority of the specimens were of high merit. One expects, however, at the Palace, to meet with at least a few novel or rare birds, and in this respect this portion of the show was disappointing.

Of Love-birds there were nine entries, and of these no less than eight were of the Peach-faced species, the remaining couple being Lavender-headed. Mr. Storey's pair, which took first prize, were beauties, and catalogued at a low price. Although the Peach-faced birds are much more common than they were a few years back, it is seldom that a pair can be bought for a reasonable sum.

The Budgerigars were good, especially those belonging to Mr. Arthur, which took 1st and 2nd prizes, but caged Budgerigars are rather dull birds at the best. There were some good yellow or albino specimens, but I do not admire these.

Class 117 contained an assortment of Rosellas and Mealy Rosellas, good, but not especially interesting, and the same may be said of the King and Crimson-wing Parrakeets (Class 118). Here Mr. Doherty's King and Queen were again first, though the former suffers from a deformed toe: nevertheless, they are a grand pair.

Class 119 (Ring-necked or Indian Parrakeets). The most interesting exhibit in this class, to my mind, was Mr. Maxwell's Malaccan or Pink-cheeked Parrakeet, which seemed, moreover, to be in fine condition. Mr. Railton's Ring-necked, which was first, was, however, a very good bird.

Class 120 (Lories and Lorikeets) contained thirteen birds, and would doubtless have been better filled if the birds could have been shown in pairs. Mr. Housden's Ceram or Chattering Lory, an old stager, was again first, and a good Ornamented Lorikeet, belonging to Mr. Maxwell, was second. Three beautiful specimens of Swainson's Lorikeet were contributed by Mr. Waddell, Mr. Bellamy, and Mr. Frostick respectively: it was difficult to say which was the best of these. Mr. H. B. Smith sent two Lories, neither of which was in first-rate condition: one of these was a Red Lory *(Eos rubra)*, the other I hesitate to name from memory, though I have seen the species at the Zoo.

Class 121 (Single Parrakeets). The Pileated Parrakeet made his third appearance and, I was glad to see, was awarded a first prize. Second prize went to a fine Fiji or Masked Parrakeet. Mr. Fulljames' Many-coloured Parrakeet was a nice bird, but not quite faultless in condition; the same gentleman took fourth with a good Blue-bonnet. I wish this species was more often to be obtained, for it is a charming bird. Two handsome Barrabands were exhibited, Mr. Seth-Smith's being the better of

the two. Mr. Swaysland had a good Patagonian Conure, and Mr. H. B. Smith a Red-rump, not in the best of plumage.

Class 122 (Parrakeets, in pairs) had an excellent pair of Many-coloured Parrakeets, which won the first prize for Mr. H. B. Smith; several gorgeous pairs of Pennants, and a pair of White-eared Conures, described by their owner as "very rare." Dr. Butler entered a pair of Rosa's Parrakeets, the Burmah variety of the Blossom-head, which were "wrong-classed," and should, I think, without doubt, have been exhibited in Class 119.

Class 123 had eleven Grey Parrots; the first-prize winner was a beauty, and all were good.

Class 124 contained a grand array of twenty Amazon Parrots. A Green-cheeked was first and a grand Yellow-naped came second. A Spectacled Amazon was third, a small and uncommon species, one of the most interesting in the class. Mr. Osbaldeston contributed a magnificent Diademed, a Double-fronted, a Salvini's, and a Maximilian's Parrot. The latter is a bird not often seen, of a rather curious metallic green colour. Though sometimes called Maximilian's Amazon, it is more correctly classed with the Pionus Parrots.

Class 125 (Eclectus Parrots) had eight birds; exhibitors should, I think, have the option of sending these birds in pairs. The specimen (No. 2,068) described as "supposed to be the only specimen in England," was not named, but bore a close resemblance to the male Red-sided, excepting only the absence of the red sides. I believe this was Westerman's Eclectus. The remaining seven were males and females of the Red-sided and Grand Eclectus.

Class 126 had a very good Red-vented or Blue-headed Parrot, one of the Pionus genus, a species not often seen and, I believe, a very desirable pet. A fine Blue and Yellow Macaw was first; and the remaining birds in the class were two Senegals, a Vasa, a Red and Blue, and an Illiger's, Macaw.

The Cockatoos were more numerous than usual, but some of them wanted washing badly. The Leadbeaters were good, especially Mr. Martin's prize winner. Two Salmon-crested birds were awarded first and second prizes respectively. Mr. Housden's Slender-bill Cockatoo made its eighth appearance at the Palace.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE TUI OR PARSON-BIRD.

SIR,—I should be glad to know whether any of the members are keeping or have kept the Tui or Parson-bird. I had a Tui some three years ago, but only managed to keep it alive for three months. I found it the most interesting bird I ever had, but it died suddenly, having been apparently quite well the day before. After death, it was found to be a mass of fat, and no doubt it died in a fit.

F. MOERSCHELL.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Moerschell.

I kept the Tui very successfully years ago, one female living with me from May, 1889, to August, 1892—over three years, in perfect health and plumage, and then it died in a fit (the usual cause of death) from eating something intended for some other birds. If properly attended to, there is no reason why it should not live any length of time.

Some two years ago, or more, since when an unusual number of Tuis have been brought over in excellent condition, I noticed that the old food had been discontinued, and that the Tuis were being brought over on condensed milk; (one of our members referred to this food in the Magazine last summer or autumn). I have used Nestlés' condensed milk and *biscuit* for a long time past for my Lorikeets, and certainly should use it (with caution, for it is very sweet) for Tuis, should I ever keep them again.

I take a little out of the tin with a small spoon, and place the spoon with its contents in a small saucer (a deep one if it can be got); over this I crumble biscuit and then fill up with water. Finally, with the spoon, to which much of the milk will adhere, I stir *well up*, until all in the spoon has been dissolved. The best biscuit for birds that I know of (if there is a better I should like to know of it) is Huntley and Palmer's tea biscuit. I give ordinary *biscuit* (the more I see of bread for birds the less I like it) and milk sop in the morning, substituting the preserved milk in the afternoon, as it does not get sour during the night: by this arrangement the birds have plenty of food in the early morning to keep them going until their "breakfast" is served.

I have tried honey and various other things, but have not found anything to come up to well-stewed apple sweetened with castor (*not* brown) sugar. I give this in addition to the milk, and also other food according to the bird.

The Tui has a brush-tipped tongue, and during a fine summer, when mine were out in the garden, they were constantly seen hanging downwards from the branches of any low bush or tree, thrusting their tongues into the flowers. They also licked *Aphidæ* from the leaves; but most of their insect prey was taken on the wing, the birds hawking until quite late in the evening—but only after the smallest gnats and midges.

Only the smallest insects should be supplied to them, winged ones in preference, as the wings seem to act as "dispersers." I do not approve of dried ants'-eggs for Tuis, unless better than any I ever see, but fresh ants'-eggs for a change might be very good. I should feel inclined to try dried flies if one could get a good sample. Do everything you can to prevent

their getting fat and lazy. The *longer* the cage the better, with perches at the ends only. *Above* each end perch there should be an extra little one; the one at the darker end will be used as a hiding-place (which these nervous birds require) the other as a gymnastic-pole—for the Tui is a splendid gymnast. The perches should be thin, but of different sizes. Never handle or frighten them, for they (especially the females) will have partial paralysis from sheer nervousness. I used always to place bromide of potassium in the drinking water before moving the one I had for so long. Be very careful about *raw* fruit, especially bananas; good grapes they appreciate, and possibly the ripest of ripe pears would not hurt them.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

BREEDING CRIMSON-WING AND KING PARRAKEETS.

SIR,—In the February number of the *Magazine*, Mr. John Doherty asks for a little information on the above subject, and I venture to send these few notes. The idea of a Dove rearing a Parrakeet is novel, and, in my humble opinion, impossible, the shape of the beak, etc., forbids it. When Mr. Doherty gets a nest of Parrakeets, and sees the parents feeding them, he will see the reason. Doves and Parrakeets do not, and cannot, feed in the same way.

Crimson-wings (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*) and Kings (*Aprosmictus scapulatus*) were bred in France in 1880, (about), for the first time, as far as I know, and have been bred (Crimson-wings especially) a considerable number of times since by amateurs. Instances have been recorded where Crimson-wings in aviaries have laid on the ground, behind a faggot placed on the floor of the aviary, where the Golden Pheasants they were kept with used to lay; another time in an open box, with saw-dust in it, placed also on the floor of the aviary; and again on the floor, in the usual nesting-box or log. This would tend to show that they prefer a nest placed low, on or near the floor, to high up under the roof; but anyone who breeds them in a good sized aviary can put a nest-box in each position, then they can chose to their own liking. Kings prefer the nest-box fixed as high as possible under the roof. Both species are capable of having two, or even three, nests in a year, when they commence breeding early in the season, and the autumn is mild. There are generally 3 eggs to the clutch, sometimes 2, but they have been known to lay 4 and 5 per clutch. They incubate 21 days, and the young remain 40 to 50 days in the nest. Food, canary seed, wheat, oats, sunflower seed, hemp and maize, mixed or separate, and spray millet; green-food—groundsel in flower, chickweed, etc., of which they require a large quantity when feeding their young. Some amateurs give also, when they have young, separately, boiled maize and milk-sop—boiling milk poured over the bread—given cold, *naturellement*, but care must be taken these two latter do not become sour; they must be given *fresh* at least once a day, and more frequently in hot weather if they do become sour. Some pairs will eat fruit, apples, pears, cherries, etc., while others will scarcely touch them. Both species are adult the third year, in full plumage by then and fit for breeding. I never heard before of a pair trying to breed in a cage so small as the one Mr. Doherty keeps his in. He has evidently a good pair anxious to breed, and with care he ought to be successful. But a larger cage, a box-cage wired at the front only, would suit better, say 3 or 4 feet cube, especially when the young leave the nest and they require more room.

A. SAVAGE, (*Rouen*).

FOOD FOR HONEY-SUCKING BIRDS.

SIR,—Apropos of the discussion on this subject, I may, perhaps, be allowed to give my experience, which is to the effect that sweetened bread-and-milk sop, made sloppy, appears to suit even such delicate creatures as Sun-birds, which take it readily and appear to thrive on it.

Green Bulbuls (both Gold-fronted and Orange-bellied) seem to like sop made with boiled rice and milk, well sweetened; so do Zosterops. I think I have also given them bread-and-milk. Condensed milk should be just the thing.

I only gave the sop once a day, and I fancy, in this climate, it generally went sour; but this does not seem to affect the birds' health. I have seen both Zosterops and a Grey-headed Mynah eat putrid banana, without any ill effects, that I saw.

Why should not fruit-eating birds like these and Tanagers be fed on scalded currants and Sultana raisins?

FRANK FINN (Calcutta).

ZOSTEROPS AND DANGEROUS BIRDS.

SIR,—I read with much interest Mr. Phillipps' remarks on Spectacle birds (Zosterops) in this month's *Magazine*.

I have kept both varieties, Chinese and Australian, in a large aviary cage with a number of small foreign birds. My Zosterops have always been fed on Mr. Abrahams' insectivorous food mixed with bread crumbs and slightly moistened, grated potato mixed with Mr. Abrahams' preserved egg, and fresh fruit daily, oranges, pears, grapes, strawberries, etc. They do not however care for bananas, and apples must be very soft and ripe to suit their little beaks. The Chinese birds merely twittered, but the grey-backed Australian cock has a very sweet song. I often see them pecking at the Millet sprays and at the seed tins, but I do not fancy they eat the seed. Mine will eat meal-worms.

With regard to the articles on "quarrelsome birds" last year, I may say that I found it impossible to keep Pekin Robins *(Liothrix luteus)* with other birds. They were always pouncing on the little Waxbills and suspending them by their tails. I had to give up keeping them in consequence, and I found the Grey Singing Finch and Green Singing Finch equally objectionable. Diamond Sparrows or Finches *(Staganopleura guttata)* are also very vicious, and one of mine killed a Pintail Nonpareil.

C. A. HODGSON.

INDIGO BUNTINGS.

SIR,—I am anxious to know if the hen Indigo-finch can be easily distinguished from a cock Indigo-finch out of colour? Is there any way of distinguishing the sex? Also would it be difficult to procure a hen?

H. K. O. WALKER.

The following reply was sent to Miss Walker.

The hen Indigo-finch is distinctly smaller than the male, three-tenths of an inch shorter from beak to end of tail. In the winter she is decidedly less blue both on wings and tail, and much more streaked, especially on the breast, with dark brown.

The hen is not often obtainable in London, but the Zoological Gardens at Antwerp sometimes have specimens to dispose of. I never succeeded in securing a female Indigo-finch myself, therefore am not in a position to give you any very definite information, but doubtless some of our members have been more fortunate.

A. G. BUTLER.

THE SPELLING OF THE NAME "BENGALESE."

Mr. Wiener and Mr. Gedney, and, I believe, all of what may be called the "earlier school" of avicultural writers, wrote "Bengalese," both for singular and plural. Dr. Butler writes "Bengalee" for the singular and "Bengalees" for the plural, and Dr. Simpson (in his interesting article on this species in a recent number of a weekly contemporary), uses "Bengalee" for the singular and "Bengalese" for the plural.

Now, with all respect, I venture to differ from my friends, and prefer the original spelling, for the following reasons: (1) Bengalese is a perfectly legitimate form, analogous to "Maltese" and "Japanese," and there is, therefore, no reason for the change. (2) Bengali would be more correct than Bengalee, but either requires to be pronounced with the accent on the second syllable (Bengáwly)—and surely it is not proposed to alter the pronunciation as well as the spelling?

The whole point is a very small one, and perhaps I ought to apologise for calling attention to such minutiæ. Of course the name itself, whatever spelling or pronunciation be adopted, is absurdly inappropriate to the little artificial product of the ingenious Japanese, which has no association whatever with Bengal.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

DETERMINING THE SEX OF PARROT FINCHES.

SIR,—I believe that most aviculturists who have studied this very beautiful species are agreed that it is in most cases difficult, in many cases impossible, to determine the sex with certainty, by a simple inspection. This being so, I think a judge is hardly justified in disqualifying two birds because he suspects that both birds are of the same sex. Unless he can decide the point with tolerable certainty it is fairer to give the exhibitor the benefit of the doubt, which he may nevertheless feel.

Dr. Butler thinks the two birds which won the first prize were both cocks, and that Mr. Osbaldeston's pair should "have taken preference." I do not think he quite grasps the situation. If I could have been certain that Mr. Smith's birds were both cocks, it would have been my duty to disqualify them: but, if I could not be certain, I was bound to admit them to competition, and having admitted them, to judge them on their merits.

Referring to the birds which Dr. Butler says were "an undoubted pair," I beg leave to differ from him. A pair they may have been; an "*undoubted*" pair they were not, for one of the birds was in immature plumage, and neither Dr. Butler nor any one else could by simple inspection have formed an opinion of much value as to whether it would eventually turn out to be a cock or a hen. By-the-bye, in his recently-published and admirable work, "Foreign Finches in Captivity," Dr. Butler (while quoting another author on this subject) sums up his own opinion in the words "*sexes alike*."

C. S. SIMPSON.

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(Continued from page 2 of cover).

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RULES OF THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

1.—The name of the Society shall be "THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY," and its object shall be the study of Foreign and British Birds. Poultry, Pigeons and Canaries shall be outside the scope of the Society.

2.—The officers of the Society shall be elected annually by the members in manner hereinafter provided, and shall consist of a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, an Auditor, a Scrutineer, and a Council of 12 members. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be *ex-officio* members of the Council.

3.—Each member shall pay an annual subscription of 5/-, to be due and payable in advance on the 1st of November in each year. New members shall pay an entrance fee of 2/6. Any member whose subscription or entrance fee shall be four months overdue shall cease to be a member of the Society, and notice of his having ceased to be a member, and of the cause, shall be inserted in the Magazine.

4.—New members shall be proposed in writing; and the name and address of every person thus proposed, with the name of the member proposing him, shall be published in the next issue of the Magazine. Unless the candidate shall, within two weeks after the publication of his name in the Magazine, be objected to by at least two members, he shall be deemed to be duly elected. If five members shall lodge with the Secretary objections to any candidate he shall not be elected, but the signatures to the signed objections must be verified by the Scrutineer. If two or more members (but less than five) shall object to any candidate, the Secretary shall announce in the next number of the Magazine that such objections have been lodged (but shall not disclose the names of the objectors), and shall request the members to vote upon the question of the election of such candidate. Members shall record their votes in sealed letters addressed to the Scrutineer, and a candidate shall not be elected unless two-thirds of the votes recorded be in his favour; nor shall a candidate be elected if five or more votes be recorded against his election.

5.—The Magazine of the Society shall be issued on the first day of every month, and forwarded, post free, to each member. The Secretary shall have an absolute discretion as to what matter shall be published in the Magazine (subject to the control of the Council). The Secretary shall refer all matters of doubt or difficulty to the Council. The decision of the majority of the Council shall be final and conclusive in all matters.

6.—The election of officers shall take place every year between the 1st and 14th of October. All candidates must be proposed by one member and seconded by another member (in writing), before they shall be eligible for election; but this shall not apply to officers willing to stand for re-election to the same office. All such proposals which have been duly seconded must be sent to the Secretary before the 14th of September. The Secretary shall prepare a voting paper containing a list of the candidates, showing the offices for which they are respectively seeking election or re-election, and shall send a copy of such voting paper to each member of the Society, with the October number of the Magazine. Each member shall make a cross (X) opposite the names of those for whom he desires to vote, and shall sign the voting paper at the foot, and send it to the Scrutineer in a sealed envelope before the 14th of October. The Scrutineer shall prepare a written return of the officers elected, showing the number of the votes recorded for each candidate, and send it to the Secretary before the 21st of October, for publication in the November number of the Magazine. In the event of an equality of votes the President shall have a casting vote.

7.—It shall be lawful for the Council to delegate any of their powers to a Committee of not less than three.

8.—The Council (but not a Committee of the Council) shall have power to alter and add to the Rules, from time to time, in any manner they may think fit.

9.—The Council shall have power to expel any member from the Society at any time, without assigning any reason.

10.—All members intending to resign their membership at the end of the current year of the Society shall give notice of their intention to the Secretary before the 14th of October, and all members who do not so give notice shall continue to be members for the year following, and shall be liable for their subscriptions accordingly.

11.—Neither the office of Scrutineer, nor the office of Auditor, shall be held for two consecutive years by the same person.

12.—The Scrutineer shall not reveal to any person how any member shall have voted.

13.—If any office shall become vacant at any time, other than at the end of the Society's year, the Council shall have power to nominate a member of the Society to fill the vacancy, until the expiration of the current year.

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR 1895-96.

Receipts.

	£	s.	d.
...last year	7	4	0
...Subscriptions and Entrance Fees ...last year	1	2	6
...mbers' Subscriptions at 5/-	52	10	0
...ntrance Fees at 2/6	6	0	0
...rade Advertisements	10	19	6
Members' Advertisements	2	4	3
Sale of Bound Copies of Vol. I...	4	4	0
Sale of Unbound Copies of Magazine ..	2	17	6
Sale of U.K.F.C.B.S.'s Reports	1	0	0
Sale of Cases for Binding Vol. I.	2	3	9
	£90	5	6

Expenditure.

	£	s.	d.
Printing Magazines	55	1	6
Stationery and Miscellaneous Printing ..	1	10	6
Postage	11	0	8
Subscription in arrear	0	5	0
Advertisement in "Bazaar"	0	15	6
Cases for Binding Vol. I. of Magazine, binding Vol. I. and packing for Post ..	2	1	5
Balance in hands of Treasurer ..	19	10	11
	£90	5	6

HORATIO R. FILLMER, *Treasurer.*

Audited and found correct,

WILLIAM H. BETTS, *Auditor, Avicultural Society.*

22nd October, 1[illegible]

THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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THE FRINGILLINÆ.

It is proposed to publish under this heading a series of articles, by different authors, upon some of the species, both British and foreign, which are comprised in this sub-family. As a rule, two articles will be published each month during the current year, one of which will deal with a British and the other with a foreign species, but no attempt will be made to observe any scientific arrangement in the order in which the articles will appear. The classification adopted by Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe in the British Museum "Catalogue of Birds" will be adhered to, but it must not be inferred that all the writers who contribute to this series necessarily approve of that classification.

The *Fringillinæ* or True Finches form one of the three sub-families into which the Family *Fringillidæ* is divided. The other two sub-families being the *Coccothraustinæ* or Grosbeaks, and the *Emberizinæ* or Buntings. These sub-families are distinguished by differences in the shape of the skull.

It is hoped that by placing British and foreign species in juxtaposition their close relationship may be better realised, and the artificial character of the distinction between British and foreign birds more clearly perceived.

I.—THE PINE GROSBEAK.

Pinicola enucleator, Linn.

By A. G. Butler, Ph.D.

This is a circumpolar species, occurring principally in [illegible] forests of conifers in the north of both Old and New Wo[illegible]

The colouring of the adult Pine Grosbeaks is ve[illegible] the general ground-tint being ash-grey, but th[illegible] crown, sides of face and rump almost wholly [illegible]

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in the male, and orange-golden in the female; the remaining feathers above and below, with the exception of those of the belly, thighs, and under tail-coverts, more or less broadly bordered in the male with vinous-rose, and in the female with golden; another peculiarity, which seems to be frequently overlooked by describers, is that in the male the feathers of the mantle and back are marked just behind their rosy fringes by ill-defined blackish V-shaped characters; the wing-coverts and inner secondaries are broadly bordered with white, the tips of the lesser coverts in the male slightly tinted with rose: the wings and tail, apart from the borders already noted, smoky blackish with very narrow pale edges, rosy on the primaries; beak, blackish-brown; feet, nearly black; iris of eye, hazel. Immature males, and males which have been kept in cages, resemble the females, but the golden of the head and rump is less orange in immature birds.

Scientific ornithologists have introduced this species into the British list on the ground that five * examples have been obtained, within a period extending over something like twenty-three years, at sea-ports or within easy reach of the sea. When it is remembered that the Pine Grosbeak is a common cage-bird in Canada; and sufficiently pleasing, when in full colour, to be attractive to sailors; although less likely to satisfy them when (owing to close confinement) the glory has departed from the plumage; the only wonder is that at least fifty have not fallen to that impulse said to be natural to true-born Britons in fine weather—"Lovely day! Let's go and kill something."

The nest of the Pine Grosbeak is usually placed on a thick branch of spruce-fir, or birch, close to the main stem and at a distance of from ten to twelve feet from the ground; it is somewhat like a large edition of that of the Bullfinch, the outer framework consisting of slender twigs of fir and the inside of fine grass-bents, roots, and hair-lichen. The eggs number from three to four, of a pale turquoise blue colour, with deep purplish-brown or blackish spots, and greyer brown shell-spots; they vary much in the same manner as eggs of the Bullfinch.

During the winter months this species is gregarious in its ...d is so tame that it is easily caught or shot, but in the ...flocks break up for breeding purposes and the birds ...t more shy, though never so much so as our

* recorded was twenty-five; this was subse- ...after further investigation) Mr. Howard ...e; which is also open to doubt.

The song in the wild bird is said to be very melodious and flute-like, the flight powerful and undulating. It is a true bird of the woods and a somewhat late breeder: it feeds on seeds of conifers, berries, and buds, as well as insects and their larvæ, and earth-worms.

About July 20th, I received a letter from Mr. James H. Fleming, of Ontario, in which he informed me that he was sending off a box containing six Pine Grosbeaks and a Purple Finch, under the care of Mr. J. B. Williams (Curator of the Montreal Natural History Society). I received this kind present on July 23rd; all the birds reaching me alive, though very dirty and a good deal the worse for quarrelling during their fortnight of close confinement.

I turned the Pine Grosbeaks out into my garden aviary, giving them a seed-mixture, consisting of sunflower, hemp, oats, canary and millet: I found that they ate these seeds in the order given above, beginning with the sunflower; they did not seem to care about the millet. During the first two or three days they washed almost incessantly, so that whenever I looked at them I was sure to see one or two bedraggled looking, soaked individuals.

By the end of the first week my birds were clean, though ragged, and five of them appeared to be in excellent health: seeing them eating worms which had crawled from below their water-pan, I dug some up and offered them; they seemed much pleased and quarrelled for them. I also found that they were very glad to get caterpillars and spiders.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Williams called upon me, and seemed gratified to find the Grosbeaks well and contented: in the course of conversation, he unfortunately told me that, in Canada, the favourite food of the Pine Grosbeak consisted of berries of the Mountain Ash. Next morning, I put a bunch of these berries into the aviary and two of the birds immediately flew down and devoured them: by the evening both birds were staggering about as if frightfully drunk; when they flew toward a perch they missed it and fell heavily to the ground; when entered the aviary they seemed scared almost out of th although, naturally, they are the tamest and most ver had, utterly devoid of fear; now they d blindly against the wires, fell to the groun flew off again madly; they had constant to see their seed, tumbled into th minutes, and after two or th

therefore, clear that berries of the mountain ash are deadly poison to captive Pine Grosbeaks.

With August, came heavy and almost incessant rains, and this did not seem to suit my Canadian birds; so that by the end of the month a third had died in a rapid decline: it was a young male in hen plumage. As I write, therefore, I have three birds left, an adult male in rose plumage, a female and (I suspect) a young male: they are in moult and may be unable to stand our sloppy climate; but while they live they are charming, though formidable to look at, being as large as Blackbirds, with stout beaks like our Bullfinch.* Doubtless, they could bite severely if they pleased, but even when they are ill and you pick them up, they do not attempt to use their beaks, but merely utter their plaintive call:—*eer; eer, eer, eer.*

The song, so far as I have heard it hitherto, is very low-pitched; a sort of liquid warbling; but it is probable that this is merely practice (usually known as recording): the birds will sit and sing on a branch within six or eight inches of your head as you stand in the aviary, and will take sunflower-seeds, caterpillars, or spiders from your fingers. If you walk outside the aviary one of them, at least, is certain to fly down to a ledge and run or skip along beside you as you go, looking up sideways and even occasionally reminding you with its *eer, eer,* that it would like a dainty. Then, if you begin to dig, the bird quietly watches until you have found a worm and, without the least excitement, takes it from your fingers.

Sometimes two birds get hold of the same worm and quietly tug until it divides in the centre; they do not appear even to dispute with any violence; a grimace, after the fashion of our Bullfinch, is usually enough; but the condition of the birds when I first received them, with bare crowns and many gaps in wing and tail-feathers, was evidence enough to prove that the Pine Grosbeak can make himself objectionable if he chooses.

My conclusions, after brief experience, therefore, may be summed up as follows: The Pine Grosbeak is the tamest and most ...ling of all finches, he is too lazy to be nervous, or spiteful; ...r him a finger, he will taste the end with his tongue, ...ite it; if he gets a sunflower-seed jammed in hi... ...e will let you put your finger in his mouth to ...erefore, most charming. But—I am afraid

* ...ult in September, the young male died, ...ter his death.

that England is not the climate to suit this bird, for we cannot give him open-air exercise without wet: still, I may be mistaken, I am sure I hope so.

II.—THE BULLFINCH.

Pyrrhula europæa, Vieill.

By Albert Rettich.

The song of the wild or untutored Bullfinch is certainly not a musical triumph, though it is very soft, without unpleasant or shrill sounds. Nor is the bird capable of mocking other species. Nevertheless, when properly trained, the Bullfinch excels them all in what many think a far more desirable and wonderful accomplishment, that is, in his remarkable aptitude for learning whistling as performed by human lips, or, as it is termed, piping.

The natural call-note of the Bullfinch is in itself a piping sound; simple, short, flute-like, and easily imitated by the human lips; this simple call the bird can modulate at will a few semi-tones higher or lower. This very elementary talent has been fostered and developed by man, calling to aid the power of mimicry nascent in the bird.

At the present time the training of this bird to pipe really pretty airs has become quite a profession among the peasants in the Black forest, Spessart Mountains, and other wooded districts of Germany, in which Bullfinches abound. They devote their attention seriously to the rearing and training of numbers of young birds every year, and dispose of them, sometimes at very remunerative prices, to the travelling dealers who supply the different markets of the civilized world.

Now, it must not be supposed that because a first-class piping Bullfinch fetches easily five pounds sterling in London, or as much as forty dollars in New York, that a royal road to fortune has been found. The general result of a season's Bullfinch training is not always so lucrative as this might lead one to believe: for, when visiting Fulda, Gelnhausen, and other places in the training districts, I ascertained that scarcely two nestlings in a hundred attain the perfection requisite to command such high figures, and the dealers have, of late years, displayed such eagerness to obtain their stock early, that the birds have not always time to complete their studies and become valuable.

But, even if that were not so, there is much to contend with. A large proportion of the young birds are females; some

die early; some learn only a part of their lesson, say the first line out of four; some learn just one short ditty, whereas, a really good piper should master two airs correctly and finish his performance with a military bugle call. Extraordinary specim[ens] will even do more than that, but they do not make their appe[ar]ance every year. The majority have to be sold at low prices, and make charming pets for the bird lover of not unlimited means and who is content to enjoy but a partial fulfilment of the bird's early promises.

Yet, all these birds receive the same care and attention to complete their education, which is conducted as follows: A score or so of learners, still in their nest feathers and each in a cage, are hung around a partly darkened room. Whenever the enterprising peasant has a spare moment he enters that room and whistles with his lips the tune decided upon for that year. By the time the moult is over, the best birds have learned that tune and are removed to another part of the cottage, where the second subject of their studies is introduced to them; viz.: the military bugle call. Only a very few show aptitude enough to be promoted to another removal for the purpose of being taught a second air, when the first and the soldier's call have been acquired by them.

Long ere this, the peasant has found out which among his team show signs of "piping to command;" he takes the cage of those most promising into his hand at all hours of the day, whistles the air, and then encourages the inmate to repeat it by coaxing him with his voice, by imitating the sound of kissing, and especially by gently rocking his head. A willing and promising pet at once hops to the front of his cage and, puffing out his plumage, sweetly gives a call or two, and then says his lesson to the best of his knowledge. When they pipe their tunes readily in response to the manœuvres just described, they are said to "pipe to command." The sound of osculation is one of the first things Bullfinches imitate to perfection.

Of late years some improvements in teaching have been introduced. Instead of moving the head to make the birds pipe to command, the same motion is effected with the hand and extended forefinger; and instead of whistling, small bird organs are made use of, the reed pipes of which are flute-like in sound and are always of the correct pitch. Bullfinches that pipe to command are much sought after, as they make most charming pets, and great trouble is taken by the teacher to educate as many as possible to that mode of producing their music.

Early in winter, the travelling collector of Piping Bullfinches and German Canaries makes his appearance and purchases all he can get at his price; the birds are transferred to the well-known wicker cages in which we see them later, exposed for sale in our large towns and cities.

Given a family of nestlings in good health, a bird organ, and the patience to turn the handle for half-an-hour every morning and afternoon, I do not see why our native "Bullies" should not be trained in this country with satisfactory results; perhaps it is being done, but I cannot say that English Pipers have come under my notice.

Bullfinches are getting less abundant in this country than formerly. No doubt the ready sale they find at comparatively high prices, causes a great many of them to be deprived of liberty. Even under the most favorable circumstances, Bullfinches cannot be said to be endowed with longevity; three years of cage life is rarely exceeded, after which period their arch-enemy, asthma, is very liable to seize them. Incorrect treatment and draughts carry off a great many before they reach even that age. The bright tints and glossy black become dulled, and the head feathers fall out, if the bird is not properly treated; whereas, a clean house, a bath, sound and varied food in which greenmeat and fruit figure proportionately, will keep him in excellent plumage and health. Imported birds do well on German rape seed, with a daily allowance of about twenty hemp seeds; but some juicy dainties should not be omitted.

In the aviary, one or a pair of Bullfinches will be found ornamental and amusing; they make a great show of affection, carrying feathers, etc., for building, and the female will lay a few eggs, but there it mostly stops; breeding Bullfinches in confinement is a thankless task. On the other hand, they should be watched from time to time, to make sure that they do no harm to the other occupants of their habitation. Not all, but most of those I have thus kept, have ended by suddenly taking a dislike to some unoffending Finch or Canary, and from that moment there was no peace until one or the other was removed. A strong cock Bullfinch can do some mischief in the limited space of wood and wire, but in such a dilemma the judicious partial clipping of the wings would be justifiable, as it is not always convenient to shut him up separately.

MY AVIARIES AND THEIR INMATES.

By R. A. Todd.

(SECOND PAPER).

In the *Avicultural Magazine* for April, 1895, I described my first experiments in aviculture; I now propose to give some of my further experiences.

I soon found that, with limited time at one's disposal, soft-billed birds are a practical impossibility, owing to the amount of cleaning and preparation of food necessary. I, therefore, decided to confine my attention to seed-eaters, of which there is a sufficient variety to absorb the interest of the most ardent aviculturist.

My next alteration was to do away with cages. Instead of these, I have now in my bird-room three aviaries, each 15 feet long and about 4½ feet wide. The centre aviary is 5½ feet high, but the roof being a span, the side ones slope down to about 3 feet. The want of height is unfortunate, but could not be avoided as the aviaries had to be built above the existing iron staging. There is room left for two or three cages, which I only use for acclimatizing and testing new birds.

The centre aviary is devoted to Weavers: the rarest occupant is probably the Red-collared Whydah; but I have lately received from Mr. Swaysland a bird which, I think, must be *Urobrachya bocagii*, a probably rarer species. I have, besides, the Yellow-backed Whydah, Yellow-shouldered, Baya, Oryx and Crimson-crowned Weavers, as well as the more usual species. There is, of course, a certain amount of bickering among these rather pugnacious birds, but they never seem to fight seriously.

Dr. Russ recommends giving aloe fibre to Weavers for their nests. In the only form I have been able to procure it, the fibres are firmly united in places by remaining parts of the pulp of the leaf, and seem, besides, unsuitable on account of their extreme fineness. A better material is a kind of raffia, which is easily split up into strips of appropriate width and length; my birds are also fond of a long-leaved grass slightly faded. My Weavers have never yet completed a satisfactory structure; they seem to prefer pilfering each other's nests to obtaining their supplies honestly from the material placed at their disposal. The Red-billed and Russ's are certainly the most satisfactory builders; the species of *Pyromelana* are too much addicted to weaving aimless masses of fibre between the wires of the aviary instead of on the branches provided for that purpose. Madagascar and Comoro

Weavers have never attempted to build at all, perhaps because they are bachelors.

The two side aviaries contain such other finches as I do not care to trust in the open air. I expect these are too crowded for breeding; I have had nests of Bengalese, Aurora, and Rufous-backed Finches, and Pied Mannikins, but with no result. Red-headed Gouldians filled the bottom of a box with grass, but the hen then died egg-bound. My Parrot Finches, then in a cage, built a nest of hay and cotton wool in a small travelling-cage in April; but, unfortunately, the cock caught a chill and died; I have only lately been able to replace him.

I notice Mr. Fillmer reports that his Jacarini Finch will eat nothing but seed; my bird is very eager after mealworms and earwigs; his disposition is quite peaceful, I have never observed him attack other birds. The White-throated and Lined Finches seem entirely seed-eaters; but I have lately got a hen Gutteral Finch which is decidedly fond of mealworms and soft food generally—is this exceptional?

In my old garden-aviary breeding results have been better but not altogether satisfactory. I made a considerably denser cover this year with furze, broom, and heather, and have had a good many nests. Three pairs of Zebra Finches have raised eight young, and there appear to be two more broods not yet fledged. Ribbon Finches have hatched out two or three times, but failed to rear their progeny; two of the cocks were bred in this aviary last year. Parson Finches have also lost two broods. A hen Nonpareil laid and sat very steadily for ten days, and then I found her nest destroyed. Saffron Finches paired and built in March, but the hen died egg-bound; and a hen I bought to replace her killed her husband, after chasing him about wildly for a couple of days.

I have tried to keep Gouldians in this aviary, but every bird has died within a few weeks, though in perfect health at first.

I have built another aviary, 14 feet long, 10 feet deep, and 8 feet high to the ridge, with a house at the back (double boarded) 5 feet deep, and the same length and height as the flight. The whole is divided into two equal compartments. In the flight I have planted ivy and bushes of box, and the front part of the ground is turfed. One compartment is devoted to Cardinals (Red-headed, Green, and Virginian), a cock Black-tailed Hawfinch, Red-headed and Japanese Buntings; these all live together perfectly amicably, but none have attempted to breed.

The other compartment contains Waxbills. A pair of Green Avadavats commenced to build in a box in the house in May, directly they were put out, but have not reared any young. A pair of common Avadavats built a tubular nest of hay and grass stems on the furze, and hatched out; one young bird has survived; it left the nest on the 15th August, and is not yet in colour, the back and wings are dark grey with a few white spots on the latter, underneath yellowish white, upper tail coverts reddish, beak black. St. Helena Waxbills also built in one of the box bushes, but their nest was almost immediately destroyed.

Mr. Farrar's account of his success in breeding is certainly encouraging, if somewhat tantalizing. It would be very instructive if he would give a more detailed description of his aviary: whether, for instance, it is entirely open to the air, or has any covered refuge for his birds in frosty and inclement weather. As regards birds injuring shrubs, I find my Cardinals utterly destroy the ivy in their aviary, but hardly touch the box; the smaller finches certainly do no harm to either ivy or box.

A great advantage in open-air aviaries is the amount of insect food birds are able to procure for themselves. I have, in particular, often noticed Indigo and Nonpareil Buntings hunting the small flies, etc., that settle on the wire netting: earwigs are also always abundant, and doubtless many other small insects.

I have seen it stated that Indigo and Nonpareil Buntings, if kept together, fight incessantly; I have had, this year, three of each of these (a cock and two hens) in the same aviary, but never observed any quarrelling among them.

REVIEW.

Domesticated Animals: their relation to man and to his advancement in civilization, by Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, Dean of the Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard University. (Smith, Elder & Co.)

This thoughtful and suggestive work contains a good deal which is of interest to aviculturists, and for their benefit we give the following extracts, in the hope that they may be tempted to read the book as a whole.

"Wherever the vocal organs of cage birds permit them to imitate human speech they are apt to devote a large part of their labour to this task, paying little attention to other less meaningful sounds. It appears to me that they perceive in a way the sympathetic character of language,

and therefore take a peculiar pleasure in copying it. It is hardly to be believed that they ever get a sense of the connotative value of words, but it is not to be doubted that they sometimes attain to a certain appreciation of the denotation of simple phrases. In this task they do not exhibit as much sagacity as the dog, a creature which learns to understand the purport of rather complicated sentences. Nevertheless, their capacity for imitating speech is a fascinating peculiarity, one which has greatly endeared them to bird fanciers.

"Those who have observed the talking birds have doubtless noted the fact that their capacity for remembering and uttering words varies greatly. I am inclined to think that in the same species some individuals can do such tasks several times as easily as others. If those speaking forms could be brought to breed in captivity, and something like the selective care were given to their development that has been devoted to the varieties of pigeons, we might well expect to attain very remarkable results. If anywhere in the animal world there is a chance to open communication by means of speech with the lower creatures, it should be here.

"The ease with which most birds, except those of prey, may be reduced to domestication is due to the remarkable intensity of their sympathetic motives. In this regard the class is much more advanced than that of the mammalia to which we ourselves belong. Accustomed as they are to ceaseless and active intercourse with each other by means of their varied calls, largely endowed with the faculty of attention, and provided with fairly retentive memories, the birds are, on the average, nearer in the qualities of their intelligence to man than are many of the species in his own class. It was long ago remarked that the birds of the remote islands, such as the Galapagos, which had never seen man, were at first not in the least afraid of him. It required, however, but a few generations of experience to show these creatures that the unfeathered biped was a singularly dangerous animal, and they at once and permanently adopted the habit of avoiding him. This incident of itself shows how quick birds are to learn large and important lessons. We see also the reverse of this education in fear in the rapid way in which birds become tame when they are secured from persecution. Whenever shooting is stopped over a considerable territory the birds rapidly become more tolerant of man's presence. Even among migratory species the individuals appear to learn that certain places where they are protected may be resorted to with safety.

"Because of their freedom of flight it is in all cases difficult to bring our perching birds into such relations with the domiciles of man that they can be truly domesticated. The success, however, which has been attained in the case of the pigeons, which have been so far made captive by the change of their instincts that they never depart far from their cotes, seems to indicate that this tendency again to go wild is by no means ineradicable. In other instances it will probably disappear as it has in this by long-continued care in breeding. Our successes with the geese, ducks, and swans, all of which belong to genera characterized by the migratory habit, show how readily in the course of time the old native instinct may be subordinated to the will of man. Although the degree of the difficulty which will be encountered in taming many wild forms may be far greater than that which has been met in those which we have domesticated, there is no reason whatever to believe that in any case it will be insuperable.

"While all the creatures of the wilderness may by the breeder's art be induced to vary in the conditions of captivity, the birds have shown themselves more plastic in our hands than any other animals. In almost every brood we find individuals possessing marked peculiarities of form or plumage. In their mental qualities also there is a like range of variation. Seizing upon these, the fanciers can guide the quick succeeding generations so as to cause the form to depart in the course of a few years very far from its original aspect. With each step in this succession of changes, the readiness with which the species responds to selective care increases. . .

"Perhaps the greatest conquests which we have yet to make among the birds will be won from the species which have the habit of dwelling mainly or altogether on the ground. These, as experience shows, can be more readily brought to the uses of man than the species which are free by their wings to wander through the realms of air. There are very many of these ground birds the domestication of which has never been fairly essayed. There are perhaps a hundred species which, in one part of the world or another, might afford valuable additions to our resources, those of ornament or of economy, and yet within three centuries only one of these, the turkey, has been brought to the domesticated state. The greater part of our game birds, such as the quail, pheasants, and partridges, though they appear on slight experiments to be untamable, could probably by continuous effort be reduced to perfect domestication. For ages they have been harried by man in a manner which has insured a great fear of his presence. We have indeed through our hunting instituted a very thorough-going and continuous system of selection which has tended to affirm in these creatures an intense fear of our kind. Only the more timorous have escaped us, and year after year we proceed to remove with the gun the individuals which by chance are born with any considerable share of the primitive tolerance of man's presence. It is not to be expected that the chicks of these species will at once accept relations with our kind. The domestication of many of these forms is to be desired, not only on account of the excellent quality of their flesh, but because of their beauty and the charm which their quick intelligences afford them. Whoever has watched them in the care of their young or their other social habits, has observed features which indicate a possible development under domestication, perhaps greater than that which we have attained in any other of our feathered captives.

"It seems most important that experiments in the future domestication of birds should be first addressed to certain large ground forms, which are now in more or less danger of extinction. The newly-instituted industry of ostrich farming has probably insured this the noblest remnant of the old avian life from destruction; but the emu and the cassowary are still among the diminishing and endangered forms which, unless taken into the human fold, are likely soon to pass away. The brush turkey and the bower bird of Australia, two of the most curious inhabitants of that realm of strange life, appear to have qualities of mind and body which would make them readily domesticable, and which would cause them to be among the most interesting of our feathered captives.

"Owing to their singularly perfect protection against the cold, and also perhaps to the quickness of their wits, birds are more readily transferable from one clime to another than any other animals. The feathered

tenants of our barnyards are, except perhaps the aquatic species and the turkey, all from the tropical realms. Experiments with various other wild forms go to show that there are very many other tropical species which will prove to have an equal tolerance of high latitudes. If this be true we may fairly look to the domestication of the varied bird life of the equatorial regions for the enrichment of our northern lands."

AVICULTURAL SMALL-TALK.

French aviculturists are sometimes more successful than we are on this side of the Channel. Is this due to the more genial climate, to greater skill, or to greater luck? We hear that there have recently been several instances in France of the successful breeding of the Many-coloured Parrakeet—when shall we hear of the same thing taking place in England?

A member reports that he possesses a female Avadavat which has been in his possession for six years, and which shows unmistakable signs of age by patches of white in its plumage. Six years does not seem a very patriarchal age, and probably many instances could be found of Waxbills and other tiny birds attaining a greater age in captivity. In "Foreign Finches in Captivity," Dr. Butler mentions a White-headed Mannikin which died at the age of eighteen years. Will those of our members who possess old birds kindly let the Secretary know about them? We may thus be able to get together statistics which will throw a little light upon the subject of the age attained by birds in captivity—a subject which is at present greatly obscured by legends, wild guesses, and assertions unsupported by evidence.

The *Feathered World* has now reached a very large circulation—we believe considerably over thirty thousand copies are issued weekly. This must be very much greater than that of any other "birdy" paper. Mrs. Comyns-Lewer heartily deserves the success which has attended her labours, for the *Feathered World* has always been on the side of honesty and humanity and everything which tends to elevate what is called "the fancy." It has never descended to the vulgarity which disfigures some of its contemporaries, and has, undoubtedly, a strong influence for good among a very wide circle of readers. The *Feathered World* is a striking instance of the success which may attend unpaid journalism, for nearly all the literary matter in its columns is the work of those who write without any expectation of payment. We sometimes think that some of the letters in the Correspondence Columns would be the better for a little more "editing,"—they would be easier to understand if the grammar were corrected, and pleasanter to read if more courteously worded—but they would certainly be less piquant and characteristic. Perhaps Mrs. Comyns-Lewer believes that a more active censorship would cost her paper more in individuality and interest than it would gain in grammar and politeness.

To those in want of an amusing pet we would recommend the Senegal Parrot. It is only the size of a small Parrakeet, but is as intelligent as a Grey or Amazon, and more active and lively. Moreover, it does

not scream. On the other hand, it is not usually much of a talker, though very clever at imitating the call-notes of other birds. It rapidly becomes very tame, and seems to be more certain of its temper than some of the larger Parrots. It has a comical way of hopping about the floor of its cage, and will sometimes roll on its back when at play, just like a kitten.

We wish all success to the new "National British Bird and Mule Club," and we also wish it a rather less cumbrous name. We observe that ten out of the twenty-one officers of the Club are members of the Avicultural Society. We notice, with pleasure, that the protection of wild birds is one of the objects of the Club.

The Cage Bird Club was wound up some months ago, and the funds in hand divided amongst the members. We are glad to hear that the members subscribed liberally towards a testimonial for Mr. Betts, and that he was presented with a handsome ruby ring—it was fitting that there should be some recognition of the manner in which Mr. Betts lavished both time and money upon the Club. We believe that we are right in saying that Mr. Betts paid deficits in the revenue of the Club to the extent of over £60. No doubt the main cause of the failure of the Cage Bird Club was the high subscription.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WHAT IS A BRITISH BIRD?

SIR,—In last month's *Avicultural Magazine* Mr. Swailes starts a correspondence on what is, perhaps, the most important matter with regard to British birds from a show point of view; and one on which I hope members will freely give their opinions. If once a definition be decided on and accepted at our principal shows, it will tend to greatly diminish the discontent which one hears frequently, and, I think, with good reason.

At the time of the last Brighton Show, I thoroughly thought the matter out, with the result that the following rules were added to the schedule.

Should no serious objection be made to these rules in the course of the next month, might I suggest that they should be put to the vote? If passed, one would have a solid ground on which to ask for their insertion in the schedules of the principal shows.

The Rules ran as follows:—

"By 'British bird' is meant any individual (foreign Bullfinches and Goldfinches excepted) of any species included in Mr. Howard Saunders' 'Label List of British Birds.' *

"By 'Migratory bird' is meant any of those species included above, which, during some part of the year, are *entirely* absent from every part of the British Isles."

J. LEWIS BONHOTE.

SIR,—My idea of a British bird, *sensu stricto*, is a bird which either breeds with us, or visits us of its own free will at some period of the year.

* "A List of British Birds," by Howard Saunders, F.L.S., F.Z.S., etc.; London, Gurney and Jackson, 1, Paternoster Row; price 6d.

I would, therefore, exclude all accidental visitors which have not been met with tolerably frequently.

1. Allowing the widest possible margin, on the off-chance of a species having been overlooked, I would not permit any bird to be exhibited in the British classes which had not been known to occur in Great Britain and Ireland at least five times.

If Howard Saunders' list were to be taken as a guide, we should have to admit species upon the show-bench in the British classes which the author of the list does not himself consider to be British birds.

2. I would not admit any bird as British, solely on the ground that specimens had been shot or caught in the British Isles; but would exclude all of those which might resonably be believed to have been liberated, or to have escaped from captivity: as examples I would exclude the Pine Grosbeak in spite of the twenty-five or more recorded occurrences (twenty-four of which are already discredited; the birds having been probably liberated). I would also certainly exclude the Scarlet Rose-finch, as being a largely imported bird, and one not likely to interest any but an enthusiastic aviculturalist, after losing its rosy colour in captivity. It has been suggested to me that the birds obtained were not in that bright adult plumage which would render them likely to have been imported; this is exactly what I should have expected, though I do not admit that only brightly coloured birds are imported.

3. I am not at all sure that it would not be best for judges at shows to exclude *all* accidental visitors, restricting the term "British" to resident species and regular immigrants. This would greatly simplify matters, and save a lot of discussion.

I see no reason for admitting certain birds known to have been imported, simply because a specimen of the exhibited species was once shot on our shores, and excluding imported Goldfinches because the particular variety has not been recorded as British.*

A. G. BUTLER.

I am disappointed that I have not received more letters upon this most interesting subject, as the point is one of great importance, and there seems to be an opportunity for our Society to do a very useful work. After carefully considering the two foregoing letters, and further correspondence with both Dr. Butler and Mr. Bonhote, it appears to me that we could not do better than accept Mr. Howard Saunders' list for general purposes, rejecting, however, those rare and doubtful visitors the English names of which he prints in italics (there are nearly one hundred of these). But I think that for show purposes it would be better for the Society to prepare a list of its own, embracing only the orders *Passeres*, *Picariæ* and *Columbæ*, and omitting all species which are so rarely found in this country that the presumption would be heavily against the British origin of an exhibited specimen.

This is, of course, merely my personal opinion, and I hope that the members will now take the matter up and express their views freely. The subject will then be brought before the Council for their decision.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

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* My Kentish-bred Goldfinches have frequently been mistaken for Russian birds.—A. G. B.

"AUTHORITIES" AND THEIR CRITICS.

SIR,—There is one point in this correspondence which has not received the attention its importance deserves. Mr. Farrar seems to have been found fault with because he reared his young Blue Robins on meal-worms (and cockroaches), but can any of our members suggest a *practical* substitute? I write feelingly; for I prefer insectivorous birds to seed-eaters, and know only too well the difficulty, at any rate here in London, of rearing the young of the smaller species of the soft-bills owing to the seeming impossibility of obtaining proper food. I am well acquainted with the danger of the mealworm, but where would the young be without it! to quote Mr. Farrar, they "would now be stiff and cold." I cannot obtain a sufficient number of cockroaches to feed two hungry parents and a brood of still hungrier youngsters—for be it remembered that usually the former will themselves partake freely of the insects of whatever kind before taking even one to their nest, and so all day and every day. Many birds will not carry egg-food and the like to their young; gentles and their relatives are generally unsuitable; and fresh ants' eggs are here unprocurable. Cannot any aviculturalist help us? We want to hear of the experiences of others and thus to learn—not to waste our strength in beating the air.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

INTERESTING OPERATION ON A GREY PARROT.

SIR,—Messrs. Cawthorn and Hutt wrote to me about a Grey Parrot of which one eye was swollen. I went and saw the bird. It seemed suffering from some tumour; I advised their consulting Mr. Bartlett, of the Zoological Gardens. As, after some weeks the eye was no better, I urged their taking further steps. The following communication is an interesting account of what was done.

F. G. DUTTON.

An Interesting Operation.

On Saturday, October 3rd, an operation of unique character was performed on a two-year old Grey female Parrot, at the Royal Westminster Opthalmic Hospital, by Mr. Henry Juler, F.R.C.S. The bird, which is the property of Mr. H. T. Hutt, of the firm of Messrs. Cawthorn and Hutt, British Library, No. 24, Cockspur Street, S.W., had been failing for some time, and, notwithstanding the fact that experts had inspected her, no real cause for indisposition could be arrived at, until skilful surgical aid was obtained. Such a step was prompted by the value of the bird; a splendid piper and talker; and the examination proved the existence of a travelling tumour upon the under-lid of the right eye, which would, in time, have affected the sight to such an extent as to wear away the eye-ball, and, in the end, bring about results which would probably have proved fatal. An operation was decided upon, and, on the day named, was successfully carried out. The bird, having been firmly held by an attendant, was treated as follows:—An incision of V-shape was made with a lancet, and the opening thus caused, enabled the operating Surgeon to remove the tumour piece by piece, in a very brief space of time. The usual steps were taken to prevent bleeding and allay pain, and, in due course, the wound was sewn up by the aid of the most modern contrivance for such a purpose. The operation was most skilfully performed, and has proved a decided success. It was witnessed by several members of the Surgical Staff and

numerous students at the Hospital, and was in every respect most interesting.

Since going through her trouble, "Polly" has talked and whistled better than ever; and it was a matter for remark, that she got over the operation very quickly, thanks to her strength and the careful treatment bestowed upon her.

GOULDIAN FINCHES AND VIRGINIAN CARDINALS.

SIR,—I am much obliged to Mr. St. Quintin for his interesting article "On the Treatment of Newly-imported Gouldian Finches." I was in hopes my question as to the treatment they require would have revealed something new in the shape of food, other than white and spray-millet, canary seed, flowering tufts of grass, and chickweed; a substitute, for example, for the occasional insect they probably pick up when in their wild state, and miss (with harm) in confinement.* My Gouldians eat a little Inga-seed now and then; but I have never seen them touch a mealworm, ant's egg, yolk of egg, or any such food so readily eaten, with benefit, by scores of other birds, and which, in moderation, would most likely benefit them too, if they would eat it.

Generally speaking, I have treated my newly-imported birds in the way Mr. St. Quintin describes, but have, nevertheless, lost more Gouldians (in value) than any other birds I have kept. My experiences agree with his in several instances—as regards their waking up on the introduction of a light, and feeding; also as regards the grit, of which, I believe, they can take too much and derive harm instead of benefit from it.

I am extremely fascinated with these lovely birds, and have carefully read all the articles I have found, in French and English, on the treatment they need on their arrival in Europe. The following may be new to some of our readers: A long and exhaustive article on the treatment of newly-imported specimens appeared some two years ago in a Parisian paper, *L'Acclimatation Journal des Eleveurs*, and in this article it was stated that in a wild state, in their native country, they purge twice a year with salt—"volontairement en absorbant du sel gemme† qu'ils trouvent aux carrières-mêmes qu'ils visitent à cet effet,"—and the article recommended that they be purged in a similar manner on their arrival in Europe. To do it, the following was advised: Mix with the sand in the bottom of their cage some pounded egg-shell, cuttle bone, and a pinch of pounded coarse salt.

Salt I have never seen recommended except by the writer of the said article. A few months after its appearance, I purchased from a shop one of the finest pairs of Redheads I ever saw. In less than a week, the cock seemed to be going wrong, and I tried the above purging; he died in a few days; I cannot say if the salt had anything to do with it, but I have not given salt to any since. One thing is certain, they seem extremely fond of the mixture and continually pick it over.

When Gouldians are thoroughly acclimatized they are, in many instances, quite hardy birds, as the following shows. In 1894, I purchased

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* Is it not probable that the food which newly-imported Gouldian Finches miss, and die for the want of, is some kind of seed, possibly in a half-ripe condition? They are strict vegetarians in England, and there seems no reason to believe that they eat insects in their native land.—ED.

† *Sel gemme* is rock salt, which I always supply to my birds, and which many of them eat greedily at intervals.—K. P.

from a gentleman in France (Sarthe), a pair hatched in his aviary in 1893. He keeps his birds, he wrote me, all the year round, in a garden-aviary, and in winter simply shuts, at night, the door of the covered part where they sleep. I believe it, for the hen he sent me had lost the tip of two toes [illegible] frost-bite. Last year, I bought another pair from him in the same [illegible] one had lost three nails from the frost-bite again. In 1889, he obt[illegible] he wrote me, 17 young in his garden aviary from one pair each of Black[illegible] Red-heads, and 12 in 1893. I could mention several other instances wh[illegible] Gouldians have been kept in this country, summer and winter, in outdoor aviaries, and, as far as I know, on the usual seed and green food only.

Gouldians, to be able to stand such an amount of cold, must, of course, be thoroughly acclimatized, or hatched in Europe; but as most of those offered for sale, by dealers especially, are *imported*, my object in asking for an article on their treatment, was in hope that it might assist in keeping down the mortality, which is, doubtless, still very great with many who purchase them. An acclimatized Gouldian is not a very difficult bird to keep, but a newly-imported one, *c'est autre-chose!*

While writing, I should like to say a little about breeding Virgini[illegible] Cardinals, on which Mr. Fillmer gives an extensive article in the Septem[illegible] number of the Magazine. From his remarks, I have succeeded wi[illegible] brood this season about as far as Mr. John Sergeant did with his. [illegible] three hatched in July, quite at the commencement, from three eggs. They fledged splendidly the first fortnight, but left the nest far too soon, before they could hop properly, much less fly, and perished one after the other from cold at night. I saw, as soon as they left the nest, how things were likely to end, and put them back several times, and as the nest was in a box, reduced the size of the opening; it was of no avail, they were out again in a few minutes, with an apparent determination of stopping out. A second nest of three, from three eggs also, followed in August, but they were abandoned nearly as soon as hatched, the parents having come into moult. I fed them on bread and milk, mealworms, gentles, scalded ants' eggs, and the usual seed. Milk-sop is a splendid food for young Cardinals and the parents feed freely with it, for the first week especially.

As regards the song of the Virginian Cardinal, it consists mostly, as Mr. Fillmer says, of the repetition of one or two loud notes; one of the notes resembling the noise a chicken makes when it has lost its mamma! It is a fact that Virginian Cardinals sing at night. I have heard mine doing so many times at ten or eleven o'clock. Hens sing, too, when the breeding season is coming round; and, with my pair, a good row, lasting several days, has often been the commencement of their matrimonial bliss: the cock singing and chasing the hen, then the hen singing and chasing the cock; they arrange matters, though, amicably afterwards, and all the eggs get fecundated. So far (4 years) I have not had a single clear egg. I keep my pair in a mixed aviary containing birds from the tiny Waxbills upwards, and, so far, not even in the breeding season, has any harm been done by them. I have never had more than three eggs to a nest.

The Redrumps I wrote about in the August number, hatched the last clutch of eggs and reared all the young—five. I have, therefore, had eleven young, in all, this season, from the pair in the box-cage.

A. SAVAGE, (Rouen).

RUFFS.

SIR,—I have two Ruffs (newly caged) coming to-day, and I should be extremely obliged by any hints which you can give me as to treatment. The man who caught them has been feeding them on worms.

My cage is 20ft. by 10ft., by 6ft. high, in the open air, with a fountain in it; also a young yew, and two that have died off.

I am desirous of knowing the most suitable food which can be readily obtained; whether I should provide any further protection from the weather; and any hints that your experience would suggest.

CHAS. LOUIS HETT.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Hett:—

At the Zoological Gardens Ruffs are fed on hard-boiled eggs chopped small, scraped meat, grated carrot, and breadcrumbs; and this is, doubtless, the most suitable diet. I have, however, successfully kept them on Spratts' Game Meat, with a little scraped meat and hard-boiled egg once a week. They also require plenty of water in a flat-bottomed dish, as they are very fond of standing in it. Of course, the more worms they can have the better, and as they are freshly caught, I should suggest feeding them at first on worms and hard-boiled eggs, gradually decreasing the worms and substituting game meal for them.

With regard to providing them with shelter: it is pratically useless, as they will not avail themseves of it; but I should see that the whole aviary is sheltered from the wind, especially at the north and east.

J. LEWIS BONHOTE.

TANAGERS AND HONEYSUCKERS.

SIR,—I have been interested in both Mr. Wiener's and the Hon. F. G. Dutton's letters. I have kept both Tanagers and Honeysuckers for several years. At the present time I have a very fine Honeysucker; also a Scarlet Tanager, which has moulted six times in the seven years it has been in my possession: it has always been in the finest health and plumage.

I feed them on broken sweet biscuits, soaked bread, potatoes, soaked nuts' eggs and grocers' currants; and fruit when in season.

JAMES B. HOUSDEN.

THE TRAFFIC IN INSECTIVOROUS BRITISH BIRDS.

SIR,—Apart from the fact that Mr. Perkins is, to say the
polite to a fellow-member in meeting a well-intentioned le
expression of disbelief, he seems altogether to have misse
original communication. It is not a question as to
is "not a cage-bird at all," and Mr. Perkins' crud
"Varet" has most likely never seen a Wood-w
the matter. Further, there was no sugge
various birds were equally difficult, one
The writer, who thinly veils his id
much too experienced an avi
Every one knows that it is ea
Wren or Flycatcher, an

seen a Wood-wren in a cage, it would not alter the fact that he is endeavouring to do his best to stop the wholesale extermination of our delicate insectivorous songsters. Even a Wagtail or a Redstart requires intelligent treatment in captivity, and, when fresh caught, unceasing attention besides; and it is this, fortunately, that protects, in a degree, these birds and the others mentioned, it being a fact that an ordinary bird-catcher does not find it worth his while to catch them, while, if he occasionally finds an accidental specimen in his "catch" he mostly releases it, as he knows the bird-dealers will not take it off his hands. Any amateur of ordinary experience would not buy one of these birds from a dealer, knowing, as he would, that it would already be half dead; but when such an one sees advertisements offering specimens at prices which would only be warranted by the birds indicated being already "meated off," he is tempted to send for them and, as pointed out in the letter which has given rise to this correspondence, some unprincipled persons have ingeniously adopted the practice of so advertising them. While the advertisements are appearing these people make nightly excursions into the country, and in the early morning catch all they can possibly get their nets over, or can inveigle on to their "limed" twigs. *All* the unfortunate captives are brought home, and if orders come in they are sold. The catcher crams them with gentles and mealworms to prolong their lives as far as possible for his own mercenary ends, but troubles nothing if, to use the words of "Varet's" letter, "scarcely one in a hundred of those sent away would live for twenty-four hours," or that "those he succeeded in selling did not represent a tithe of those originally caught." Even if the buyers knew they were receiving freshly caught birds, and knew how to properly treat them on arrival, the cruelty involved would be quite sufficient to call aloud for suppression, but, as the inhuman traffic is now carried on, purchasers are deceived into the belief that the birds they are buying are already accustomed to captivity, and the cruelty is thereby intensified.

If I have not already trespassed too much upon space, I should like to mention an experience of my own which has taught me never to buy birds from advertisements of unknown people. Some years ago I had a small collection of British birds in an outdoor aviary, and quite the most interesting of the lot were a pair of Blue-tits and a pair of Coal-tits. Everyone who has kept these charming little birds knows that they will get through apertures which seemed, beforehand, much too small to be unsafe, and one day I lost all my four birds. I bought many afterwards from time to time in the bird-shops, but could never keep one alive. Seeing an ...sement from a man in Devonshire, I wrote, ordering two pairs each ...its, Marsh-tits, and Coal-tits. In due time two cigar boxes were ...these, upon being opened, proved each to contain six birds, ...have not the slightest doubt that the advertiser was of ...entioned by "Varet," and was one who caught birds ...cked them off, dead or alive, so long as he re-

...intervention of the R.S.P.C.A., or of the ...our feathered songsters. They could ...ateurs, and can scarcely be blind ...l them.

HENRY J. FULLJAMES.

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PRICE SIXPENCE.

THE

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BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to Members monthly.

Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them. Dead birds cannot be received for identification or *post mortem* examination, on account of the risk of infection.

Bound Volumes of Vol. I. of the *Avicultural Magazine* can be obtained from the Secretary, price 15/6; there are only a very few copies remaining. Bound copies of Vol. II. are now ready, price 6/- to members, 7/6 to non-members. Most of the monthly parts of Vols. I. and II. can still be obtained from the Secretary, unbound, price 6d. each; but No. 2 (December, 1894) and No. 4 (February, 1895), are out of print.

The Executive Committee regret that the drawing by Mr. FROHAWK, announced to appear with this issue of the Magazine, has to be postponed until June or July. It should be known that the delay rests entirely with the artist and not with the officers of the Society.

MEMBER DECEASED.

On the 3rd April, 1897, HENRY ERSKINE ALLON, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, son of the late Rev. HENRY ALLON, D.D., aged 32.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

Mr. J. W. MURGATROYD, Ash Brook, Heaton, Bradford.
Mr. V. CASTELLAN, Hare Hall, Romford, Essex.
Mr. JOSIAH CRATHORNE, St. Wilfrid's, Bridlington Quay.

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(Continued on page 3 of cover).

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DEAR SIR,—Just a line to express my satisfaction of the admirable manner in which you have executed the work I have entrusted to you. I observe with pleasure the natural attitude of the birds, which undoubtedly is due to your knowledge of Natural History, an acquaintance of which must be a great acquisition to a Taxidermist.

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VOL. III.—No. 31. *All rights reserved.* MAY, 1897.

THE INMATES OF MY BIRD-ROOM.

By THE LATE ERSKINE ALLON.*

To describe the occupants of one's bird-room is by no means an easy matter. In the endeavour to avoid giving a mere catalogue of names, the writer is liable to go to the opposite extreme, and furnish minute details of the domestic concerns of common birds, which, however much they may interest their owner, will not be attractive to aviculturists in general, who are quite capable of making such observations for themselves. In order to avoid the accusation of committing either of these offences, I may say at once that the real object of what follows is to show that with very few exceptions all the small seed-eating birds usually imported can be kept flying loose together in a room which, though of a fair size, by no means answers to Dr. Russ' palatial requirements. Among these exceptions I include, of course, all Parrakeets, Weavers (as a class), and Java Sparrows. As regards many small seed-eaters, the recognised authorities on ornithology have propagated such alarmist ideas as to the combative habits of many kinds that my bird-room was for a long time lacking in species that, when introduced, proved themselves to be absolutely harmless. The mere fact of three hundred birds living together without seriously quarrelling—much less murdering one another, speaks volumes for their amiability. Of course, the arrangements of the bird-room have

* A melancholy interest attaches to this the only contribution to the *Avicultural Magazine* from Mr. Allon's pen, in consequence of his death shortly after correcting the proof. Mr. Allon, though personally known to very few of the members of the Society, was a true ornithologist, and possessed a rare knowledge of the scarcer foreign finches. His death is a severe loss to the Society, none the less real because most of the members were unaware of the extent of his knowledge. Some few months ago he sent us a long list of articles which he proposed to write for the Magazine, and it is sad to think that this, the first of them, must also be the last.—ED.

something to do with this, but of these it is impossible to speak now.

First among treacherous birds I should place the Rock Sparrows (*Petronia*) which, though fascinating when caged (*P. flavicollis* is a charming singer) are simply murderous ruffians among other small birds. Then there is the Australian Fire-finch. I have had six pairs, but never one in which the cock did not attempt wife-murder. My present pair have to be caged separately. The cock's power to do evil does not equal his will, otherwise he would have slaughtered a Crimson-crowned Weaver, who fled for his life before him! Mr. Abrahams says that the above has been his invariable experience with these birds; and he has had many hundreds of pairs. Lastly, there are, I regret to say, Parson Finches. I have had comparatively few of these birds, as they never seem to ail anything; but I have caught them stealing eggs, pulling nestlings on to the floor, and hanging Waxbills up by the leg. Therefore, they are imprisoned for life. All the undermentioned birds, however, fly loose.

To begin with Grosbeaks. I have, at present, pairs of the Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca cyanea*) and of the smaller and brighter *Guiraca parellina*. What the bird thus named in the Zoological Gardens is, I will not venture to say positively: but it certainly is not a Grosbeak. These birds, as well as other species I have had formerly, look very strong, but their undue zeal for meal-worms is often fatal to them. Another of their weaknesses is a pomegranate, which they clean out almost as quickly as a Tanager would.

Of the *Spermophilæ*, I have the White-throated, Bluish, Plumbeous, Reddish, Guttural and Lined Finches. Has it ever been pointed out in how many respects the last named differs from his relations? He shows considerable affection for his hen, he lets his nails grow like a Mannikin, and worst of all, he is distinctly delicate, dying generally from some form of paralysis. The *Spermophilæ* hens, in general, build their nests alone, preferably of cotton wool. This is the only drawback to success in breeding, as the nest is so flimsy that hen and eggs sooner or later make an ignominious descent to the floor. All my hens lay, and I have never known one egg-bound.

Of Jacarini Finches, I have two cocks (one of the Central American variety, without the white quill lining, which is such a distinctive feature of this bird) and one hen. The hen I have never seen elsewhere, but she is a most uninteresting looking

bird, much like a hen Combasou. As to the question of insect food, my experience is that the *Spermophilæ* when first imported, and the Jacarinis always, are very eager after it.

A pair of Cuba Finches, though in fine condition and eager to nest, have unfortunately fixed their affections on a tree sacred to the Aurora Finches and their young, and consequently have never got on far with their own arrangements.

Of True Finches I have two pairs of Trumpeter Desert Finches, some Black-headed Siskin cocks (I have never seen a hen), and a Mexican Siskin (*Chrysomitris mexicanus*) a delightful little bird in every way, whose rather thin but not unpleasant little song is to be heard all day. There are also a hen Scarlet-rose Finch (*Carpodacus erythrinus*), an Alario, and various African Sparrows. Of these the most interesting and the prettiest are two Golden Sparrows (*Passer luteus*) whose one drawback is that they will take their dust baths in a seed trough. Swainson's Sparrow is a somewhat larger bird, prettily coloured, but so terribly shy that one gets suspicious of his amiability. It is generally these apparently nervous birds who commit murderous assaults in dark corners. He is the only Sparrow I have that refuses insect food.

With the exception of *Serinus flaviventris*, I have, I believe, all the Serins commonly imported, from the Serin Finch and the Wild Canary (which flying in the bird-room is indistinguishable from the Cape Canary) to the Sulphureous Seed-eater. None of these birds fight, save the cocks of the Grey Singing Finch pairs with whom baldness seems to be a necessary preliminary to breeding—and they have bred several times with me. On the other hand, the reputedly timid Pileated Finch (especially the hen) I have found distinctly aggressive, while the *Sycalis* tribe always behave themselves admirably. Saffron Finches seem to frighten rather than hurt the smaller birds. My pair I have had for years, and they have done no damage at all. There are also *Sycalis arvensis*, and a hen of *Sycalis pelzelni*, a bird which puzzled me extremely until Mr. Abrahams came to the rescue and 'spotted' it at once. The cock must be a handsome bird.

A pair of Citril Finches (*Chrysomitris citrinella*) may also be mentioned, though they should more properly be included under the Siskins. They are seldom imported, but are neither particularly ornamental nor interesting.

I have two pairs of Diuca Finches, which can be cordially recommended as strong, active, good-natured and striking looking birds. Their song, however, is as much a myth as that of

the Cuba Finch. It is rather like that of the Chingolo Song-sparrow—noisy, but not remarkably pleasant. They have the funniest love dance I ever saw in a small bird.

As to Buntings, I have several Red-backed Buntings (*Emberiza rutila*), Brown-headed Buntings (*E. luteola*) Ortolans, and, of course, Nonpareils and Indigos—also the rare little Seven-streaked Bunting (*Fringillaria semptemstriata*) from N.E. Africa. As to the so-called 'natural antipathy' of Nonpareils and Indigos, I must confess myself sceptical. Having kept several pairs of each species together for a considerable time I have found no trace of it apparent—on the contrary they usually perch upon the same tree.

To run rapidly through my Weaving Finches, of the Whydahs, the smaller species only are possible in a bird-room. But I have the Broken-collared Whydah, which the French dealers call the 'Veuve de Madagascar.' The bird is obviously different in many respects from the ordinary Paradise Whydah when in colour, but the English authorities do not appear to distinguish it. One or two Rufous-backed Mannikins and Dwarf Finches, and several pairs of Pied Grass Finches are all that are worth mentioning among the *Spermestes*.

The African Fire Finches (*Lagonosticta*) are heart-breaking birds. The two ordinary species (*L. senegala* and *L. minima*) are difficult enough to keep in health—at any rate the cocks are. But with the exception of the Brown-headed Fire Finch (*L. brunneiceps*), and the Masked Fire Finch (*L. larvata and L. vinacea*), I have never been able to keep any other species for more than a couple of months. The survivor of a pair invariably follows his or her partner in a couple of days. In most cases the mischief is done before they arrive. Lavender Finches have in comparison the constitutions of giants. I had a Grey-tailed Lavender Finch (*L. incana*) sent me lately with some of the ordinary species, but it died the second day.

Of Red-headed Finches (*Amadina erythrocephala*) I have only cocks. The constant egg-binding of the hens, and the difficulty of replacing them, has led me to substitute hen Cut-throats which please the cocks equally well. The egg-binding continues, but the expense is less.

My experience of Diamond Sparrows is that they are harmless—nay, positively benevolent in disposition. My pairs sit together all day in a large open nesting-box, buttressed up all round by rows of Waxbills, who evidently have a great respect and affection for them. Another wickedly maligned bird

is the Aurora Finch. This is my favourite bird and I always keep four or five pairs at least. Confiding, good-natured, and never ill when once acclimatized, I know no species that nests so readily, so successfully, and with such unfailing regularity. The pairs generally use cocoa-nuts or nesting-boxes, placed side by side, and they are absolutely fearless. I have known a hen continue sitting while the top of the nesting box was being *scraped*. And these are birds that we have been told are unsuitable for a bird-room! The Crimson-faced Waxbill (*Pytelia melba*) is far other in disposition. I should call it spiteful, were it not so lazy that it only snaps at every bird that comes near it, and never takes the trouble to chase smaller Waxbills. The French dealers consider this the most delicate of the imported African Waxbills, but I have had several cocks, and have not found them particularly so. It certainly is a remarkably pretty bird, and it is a pity that the hen is so seldom seen, as if a high temperature was kept up, it might be induced to breed. It is insectivorous.

It is unnecessary to more than mention a number of such ornamental finches as Double Banded and Cherry Finches and Sydney Waxbills, save to say that not even the Zebra Finch has bred with me. Probably the bird-room is too crowded for fussy or nervous birds to go to nest successfully.

A hen Combasou laid eggs several times last summer. Unfortunately she was very much weakened, and has since died in moult.

The only Mannikins worth mentioning are the Javan Maia Finch (*Munia ferruginosa*), five varieties of the Spice bird, a pair of Pectoral Finches, and the Scaly-throated Sharp-tailed Finch (*Uroloncha squamicollis*). A small herd of Sharp-tailed, Striated and Bengalese Mannikins do nothing but crowd, a dozen at a time, into a nest-box 'made for two.' They are all more or less unsatisfactory birds when kept in any number. The way in which a collection of Bengalese will pile themselves on the top of one unfortunate egg is most aggravating.

Several pairs of the *Ruficauda* bring me to the true Grass Finches (*Poëphila*). Of these I have all the species mentioned in the Museum Catalogue—Parson Finches, Long-tailed Grass Finches (*P. acuticauda*), Masked Finches (*P. personata*), White-eared Finches (*P. leucotis*), and Goulds. There seems to be some confusion between the Masked and White-eared Finches, the former being exhibited under the latter name, and single specimens of each being sold as pairs. The absence of any

white on the face is quite sufficient to distinguish *P. personata*. It is curious that several pairs of *P. acuticauda* should have lately reached England from France, considering the keenness with which French dealers look out for this bird. A Marseilles dealer told me that it was the most expensive to buy on board ship of all the foreign finches. It certainly is more ornamental and better tempered than the Parson Finch.

Of the *Erythrura* I have six pairs of Pin-tailed Nonpareils, two or three Parrot Finches, and four Three-coloured Parrot Finches (*E. trichroa*). The latter are always in fine condition, so, as a rule, are the Pin-tailed Nonpareils, but I should be ashamed to say how many Parrot Finches I have lost. Many of the Pin-tailed Nonpareils have been in the bird-room for two years and over. Except a couple of pairs of Dufresne's Waxbills, nothing I have is worth mentioning in this class save, perhaps, a hybrid between the Grey Waxbill, and the Orange-cheeked Waxbill. There are five pairs of Cordon Bleus, not one which has died during two years and a half. Mr. Abrahams succeeded in getting me a pair of Violet-eared, but they have not arrived yet.

Other birds include four pairs of that ridiculous creature the Frontal Grosbeak (*Sporopipes frontalis*). Half Weavers and half Sparrows, they belie their lineage by being of a peaceful disposition; and they sing like Mannikins! Each pair appears inseparable. Eating, drinking and as nearly as possible flying together, they look like Siamese twins. A row of them gradually elongating their necks simultaneously is an absurd sight.

There is also a Streaky-headed Grosbeak (*Poliospiza gularis*) and two cocks of that delightful little bird the White-backed Lark (*Pyrrhulauda leucotis*), about the size of a Linnet. Also a pair of the nearly allied White-crowned Lark (*P. verticalis*). Those last-named four birds are somewhat combative, which, under the circumstances, is hardly to be wondered at.

I may also mention two hybrids between the Serin and Green Singing Finches.

I have also a flight cage of Weavers, some Black-tailed Hawfinches, and a pair of Shâmas, which I consider worth all the other birds put together. But that is another story.

THE FRINGILLINÆ.

XI.—THE SAFFRON FINCH.

Sycalis flaveola, Linn.

By A. G. Butler, Ph.D.

Abundant from Southern Brazil westward to Venezuela, the range of this finch extends over nearly the whole of South America. In Argentina, however, it appears to be replaced by Pelzeln's Saffron-finch *(Sycalis pelzelni)* which agrees perfectly with it in habits and song and, as I have proved, breeds freely with it without hesitation, the resulting young being barely, if at all, different from the common type, but resembling their father—the true Saffron-finch.

Because the eggs of the Saffron-finch are very like those of our Tree-sparrow, it has been supposed by some writers that it must be nearly related to *Passer*; but this is by no means the case. At one time I believed, as Gmelin, Buffon and Latham did, that it was a Bunting, for its nest is somewhat characteristic of *Emberiza*, being a firm cup, formed chiefly of hay and with very little lining, but (unlike that of *Emberiza*) set in the middle of a mass of rubbish of all kinds: its violent courtship is also somewhat Bunting-like.

As a matter of fact the Saffron-finch is actually the Canary of Brazil; and, as Dr. Russ observed, is called by dealers 'Brazilian Canary-bird'—'Canario der Brasilianer' and 'Kanarie van Brazilië.' It is indeed nearly related to the genus *Serinus* to which the common Canary belongs.

In its native country the Saffron-finch builds its nest in holes in walls or trees and in suitable nests of other birds, from which it often expels the owners; but, in confinement, it likes nothing so well as a box of the cigar-box pattern half filled with hay, upon the top of which it constructs its nest.

The courtship of this species is, not unlike that of our Chaffinch, very violent: indeed if the hen persistently refuses her husband's advances (as she always does at first) he does his best to kill her, holding her down and viciously tearing feathers and skin from her crown. After I had kept a pair together in a large flight-cage for two years and had bred many birds from them, the hen bird (in 1896) concluded that she had done enough in the way of bringing up families and flew at the male bird whenever he approached her. At length he lost his temper and, unless I had removed her, would undoubtedly have murdered

her: her head was covered with blood, the skin of the crown torn off and both eyes closed and swollen. She remained quite blind for a fortnight, but managed to find her way to food, water, and even to a high perch; and so tough are these birds that, in less than three weeks, she was in perfect health though bald-headed; she however died about a week later.

Not only is the Saffron-finch vicious in its courtship, but it is spiteful towards smaller associates in an aviary, and everlastingly disputing with and chasing members of its own species; yes even its own children as soon as they are strong on the wing. It is therefore not to be recommended for amiability. Its song is lively but ear-piercing and gritty, chiefly consisting of those alluring sounds produced in mischief by school boys upon their slates: the song is extremely rapid however, and to a person with delicate nerves is most distracting. I do not mind it myself, not being troubled with the affection known as 'teeth on edge.'

My Saffron-finches breed when they please and I do not trouble about them. Last year their eggs were broken a good deal, and probably the newly-hatched young eaten, by Manyar Weavers; but they brought up a nest of four or five: a second brood was going on well, but the Weavers interfered, so that only one bird left the nest about the first Sunday in the present year.

It has been said of the Chaffinch, and of a few other birds which furiously fight with their wives for supremacy, that they pair in the air: they however do nothing of the kind, the earth or a branch being used for the purpose; but before the female has learned that the male is her lord, the two birds (whether they be Chaffinches or Saffron-finches) grip with claw and tear with beak, until their wings become locked and they fall helplessly to the ground, the shock usually serving to sober them for a time; but no sooner have they rested than they are at it again hammer and tongs.

When rearing their young, my birds feed largely upon soft food, a saucer of which stands in the aviary for the benefit of a *Liothrix*. They eat their fill and then fly straight to the nest-box to disgorge.

Sycalis flaveola cannot be greatly recommended as an aviary bird, although it undoubtedly keeps the place alive. It has some pretensions to beauty and its eggs are rather prettily marked; but its song is not melodious, and although it will breed freely the young are not readily saleable even at about half the usual market price. Gaudiness of plumage, beauty of voice, or rarity

are the three necessaries any one of which will sell a bird ; but where all are absent one might almost as well breed sparrows.

XII.—THE LINNET.

Acanthis cannabina, Linn.

By J. H. Verrall.

This bird, which is variously known as the Brown Linnet, Common Linnet, Grey Linnet, Red Linnet, Whin Linnet, Linnet Finch, Red-headed Linnet, Rose Linnet, Yellow Linnet, Lint-white, Little Linnet, and Song Linnet, presents at times a different appearance according to sex, age, and season. Pied, white, and cinnamon varieties are also occasionally seen.

Its usual colour is brown, and it is as a Brown Linnet that it always appears as a cage-bird, for, notwithstanding that when caught it may have a brilliant red head and breast (the usual summer plumage of the adult male), yet after the first moult in captivity it will become a plain brown bird.

As a songster the Linnet is unsurpassed among seed-eating birds. Its song is very sweet, cheerful, and melodious, and never loud or shrieking.

The Linnet is always a healthy bird in captivity, requiring no special food or attention, and contented and happy whether in a small or large cage. It needs only to be supplied with a mixture of canary and rape seed ; ripe groundsel and plantain, of which it is very fond, may be given occasionally. When a caged Linnet dies it is usually either from apoplexy or old age. They have been known to live for eighteen years in a cage.

The Linnet moults very easily, but is better kept warm during moulting, and the cage should be partially darkened. Green food is not required at this time—in fact the bird is better without it.

Linnets are best caught young in August or at the beginning of September, before they have acquired the red feathers on the breast. They then soon become tame, and some of them will sing within a fortnight of being caught. The purchaser of an early caught Linnet had better trust to the honesty of the seller as to the sex, as the difference between the sexes is then very trifling.

Linnets do not all sing alike—and an exceptionally good singer, tame and home-moulted, may be worth as much as twenty shillings—but they never have a disagreeable note. And they sing for ten months in the year.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE UVÆAN PARRAKEET.

SIR,—Did any members of the Avicultural Society have any of the recently-imported *Nymphicus uvæensis?* If so, have they been successful in keeping them alive, and how have they fed them?

I had seven—two on Feb. 17, and five on the 18th. One was an old one, and six were young. One of the young ones was ill when it arrived, and died in a day or two. Then one of the first pair fell ill and died, and was quickly followed by the old one. The Prosector of the Zoo dissected the young one; Sir Everett Millais the old one. The organs were healthy, but the lower bowel of the old one was congested. The four remaining ones seemed healthy, but I soon saw one was failing: it died, and I have not had the report on that. Then the three remaining ones began to eat less, and the strongest fell ill. It died, and dissection revealed that the liver was out of order.

Two are still alive, but they have ceased to feed well, and I daresay will follow the others.

I am persuaded it is a food difficulty. I was told they had been brought over on paddy, hemp, canary, and monkey nuts. I have tried bananas and grapes: they were not approved of. I have given millet, hemp, canary, boiled rice, boiled Indian corn, bread and milk, sponge cake, pea nuts, and chilies; everything is eaten eagerly at first: the ones that were the first to succumb eating seed till almost the very last. But these later ones refuse food—though one of them likes to have bits of bread and milk given it occasionally.

I asked Mr. Bartlett to advise me; but he said they had bought two at the Zoo, and both were looking ill. He could not find anything that would do. Does anyone know what they eat in New Caledonia?*

I have always thought them attractive birds, and wished to breed them; but I do not appear to be likely to attain my desire.

F. G. DUTTON.

The following reply was sent to the Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton:—

I have not had my Uvæan Parrakeet long, so cannot be sure of its proper treatment; I will briefly relate my little experiences.

I obtained a pair on February 12—but the male (which was sick when I received it) died in a few days. The female is strong and clever on the wing, runs actively about, has become fairly (comparatively) tight in plumage, and seems pretty well established. She is as tame as a kitten; flies on to our heads, arms, anywhere, and calls out to me if she hears my voice in the house.

For standard food she has canary, hemp, crumbled biscuit (dry), and date or fig cut into small pieces; she has also had millet and oats, but to[o] them only occasionally. Now and then she is treated to a sound ba[na] (*not* peeled), and sometimes she will attack half an orange. The g[reat] difficulty with her has been to relieve her great craving for grit, and to get her digestive arrangements into order without having a block or

* It is *N. cornatus* that comes from New Caledonia. *N. uvæensis* comes from the island of Uvea.—R.P.

stoppage of any kind. With wheatmeal biscuit, the hardest bits of toast-crust, etc., she seems to have got into a fairly healthy state, and ought to do now. Sometimes I have given fluid magnesia in the drinking-water, and sometimes sulphate of iron.

She is in the dining-room, and at breakfast her cage-door is opened, and she at once makes for the bread—I never let her have crumb, only the hard crust. Soft things like butter and marmalade she does not like. I encourage her to drink fairly hot water out of the slop-basin: she takes a good deal and I think it is good for her. She likes to go for the plants in the window (when I am attending to her cage—never at meals), but only attacks some creepers (I forget the name)—but out of regard for the plants I take her away, literally by force,—so possibly a taste of green food might be beneficial.

R. PHILLIPPS.

SIR,—I add a post-script to the above letters. I have come to the conclusion that Horned Parrakeets are seed-eaters, but that these arrived with impaired digestions. Had I treated them as you would treat a person recovering from starvation, I might have saved them. They ought to have been kept chiefly on sop, and allowed to have seed only very gradually.

My bird is still alive, but it gets neither better nor worse. It is lively, though not tight in plumage, and the tail is not reproduced. I think some benefit has resulted from my administering dialysed iron in the water.

Mr. Phillipps thinks he has distinguished the sexes. I did not find myself successful in so doing. The first two sent me as a pair, and which I thought myself were a pair, proved to be two cocks. Of the other four young ones, one which was much smaller than the others and looked very feminine, was a male; of two others, larger than the rest which I considered two males, one was male and the other female.

F. G. DUTTON.

LOGS AND NEST-BOXES FOR PARRAKEETS.

SIR,—When I first commenced breeding Parrakeets, I experienced some difficulty in procuring the above in the various sizes required, and well adapted for the purpose. I venture, therefore, to send you the enclosed sketches and notes, hoping they will be of use to members of the Society who may be experiencing the same difficulty.

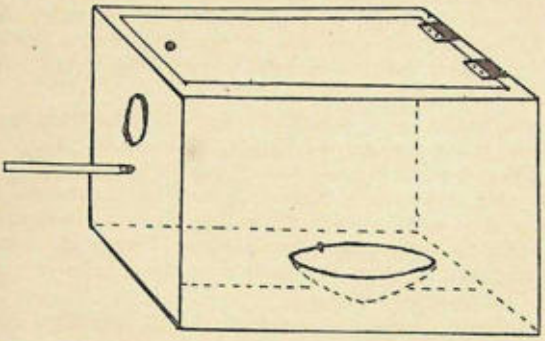
In my own aviary I generally put logs and boxes, but so far have had more young reared in the boxes than in the logs, although the latter were made to order and are of an unusually large size. The boxes, as described, I frequently make myself, and as a box of about the required size can generally be got from the grocer for a few pence, and the wooden bowl for about the same amount, the cost of the box complete is but a trifle. No *exact* dimensions can be given, nor are they necessary, for I find as regards the box, a Parrakeet is not particular to an inch either way.

The following sizes are *about* what is required, but if any difference, rather larger than smaller.

	BOWL.	BOX.
For Budgerigars	3 ins. diameter, 1 in. deep	8 ins. long, 4½ wide, 6 high.
,, Turquoisines	4 ,, ,, 1½ ,, ,,	9 ,, ,, 5 ,, 7 ,,
,, Red-rumps	4½ ,, ,, 1¾ ,, ,,	10 ,, ,, 6 ,, 8 ,,
,, Rosellas	5½ ,, ,, 1¾ ,, ,,	12 ,, ,, 8 ,, 10 ,,
,, Crimson-wings	6 ,, ,, 2 ,, ,,	14 ,, ,, 9 ,, 12 ,,

The hole by which the birds enter the box must, of course, be cut according to the size of the Parrakeets the box is intended for—about 1½ inches is sufficient for Budgerigars and about 3 inches for Crimson-wings—the other sizes in proportion.

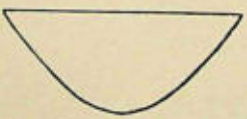
Such boxes can also be made to order by any carpenter or any dealer in birds and their requisites; and by using wood for the bottom 1½ inches thick and making the necessary cavity in the wood itself, the wooden bowl and cementing is done away with. As I make my boxes



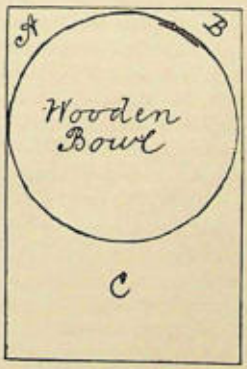
Box complete—Lid, on hinges, lifts up for cleaning out.



Bad shape, flat bottom, eggs roll about.



Good shape, round bottom, eggs keep together.



View of the bottom of the box, corners A. B. & front part C. are filled up with plaster, or cement, level with the top of the bowl.

myself and am not clever enough to cut the required cavity in the thick wood bottom, I have to resort to the bowl and cement—it answers just as well—I have used both kinds. The box, when hung up, can be sheltered by branches and made nice and secluded. Young Parrakeets hatched in such boxes can be heard scampering about in them days before they are old enough to launch out into the world, and they gain strength by the exercise.

A. SAVAGE. (Rouen).

THE AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE REPORTS ON THE CRYSTAL PALACE SHOW OF 1897.

SIR,—It is a somewhat ungracious task, especially on the part of an exhibitor, to criticize the critics, but I venture to offer, in all sincerity, the following remarks upon the articles in the March number of the *Avicultural Magazine* referring to the Crystal Palace Show.

I think I cannot do better than begin by noticing Mr. Bonhote's "protest against distinctive marks upon the cages, such as instructions for feeding . . . . ." I do not think for a moment that Mr. Bonhote is referring particularly to me, but as every one of my cages had a label, "Please do not feed," I trust I may be excused in explaining that these labels were affixed *after the judging*.

Those who saw the sticky mess which did duty for "food" at the show, and which is very justly condemned by Mr. Marshall as "simply disgraceful," will admit that it was a very necessary precaution to instruct the attendants not to give it to one's birds. A Starling might have managed to exist for a day or two upon it, but to give it to delicate insectivorous or fruit-eating birds was simply an outrage. I know my own birds would have starved rather than eat such a mixture. Hence my "distinctive labels," "Please do not feed."

I shall not occupy your space by going, in detail, through the differences of opinion between your contributors and the judges, as they represent, of course, only one opinion against another, but I should, nevertheless, like to endorse Mr. Bonhote's mention of the Lesser Redpolls as having been unjustly overlooked. Our judges do not seem to know that the Lesser Redpoll is a true resident British bird, while the Mealy Redpoll should really be in the migratory class. This question, together with the proper classification of the Bramble-finch, and sundry matters of the same sort, will form a subject for the consideration of the British Bird and Mule Club, after they have settled the question now engaging their attention, namely, "What is a British cage-bird?"

No. 1643, referred to by Mr. Bonhote as "a fine Ortolan Bunting, a thorough migratory bird," is catalogued as a Woodlark. I have no note in my catalogue to this number, so I cannot say whether Mr. Bonhote or the catalogue is correct, but would Mr. Bonhote admit an Ortolan Bunting as a British bird, migratory or otherwise? For myself, I think they are not found sufficiently often in England to justify their inclusion among our birds at all. I have one myself which I have never shown, thinking it would not be recognized in the British classes.

Mr. Bonhote, I think, is rather unduly severe upon my Swallow. He says it "has been a Swallow." I can tell him that it is still *very much* a Swallow; and if he saw it swallow mealworms he would admit it justified its name. The bird is in perfect health, and so tame that it will feed from one's fingers, and I have every hope of successfully moulting him, and of showing him next year as a *cage-moulted* Swallow. No one expects to see, in February, in perfect condition, a Swallow caught the previous Summer.

The Talking Starling specially mentioned by Mr. Marshall, is the bird which was the subject of an article in the *Avicultural Magazine* of June, 1895. He says two or three sentences very distinctly, and I am sorry he did not make himself "understanded of" Mr. Marshall. Nevertheless, "Jacob"

could not expect to be higher than third, considering that Mrs. Hobbs' famous "Victor" was only second.

I quite agree that a Raven is not a cage-bird at all, and should never be admitted into competition as such.

I must ask the privilege of replying to Dr. Butler's remarks upon the Weaver and Whydah class (No. 105). Dr. Butler, referring to my Giant Whydah, says, "being a young bird, it has not yet attained its full colouring." This bird won 1st at the Crystal Palace in 1895, and was then fully matured—he cannot, therefore, be a young bird. My experience is that the "colouring"—by which I presume Dr. Butler means the shoulder markings — *deteriorates* with age, not improves. The Crimson-banded Whydah I have had since 1894, and he was in full plumage when I bought him. He can scarcely be less than four years old, and his colouring gets paler with each moult.

Further, my other Whydahs do not conform to Dr. Butler's statement that most Whydahs are in February losing their summer dress. My Paradise and Pin-tail Whydahs were just coming into colour at the date of the Palace Show, and are now nearly in full plumage.

Everyone will agree with Dr. Butler that "foreign" Bullfinches and Goldfinches have no business amongst the tropical birds. Moreover, wherever they are, they should be judged by the British bird judge, and not by a foreign specialist.

The query by Mr. Seth-Smith, "where are the pretty little Red-sided Tits?" brings home to one the memory of lost opportunities. These birds came over in considerable numbers in 1895, and could have been bought for nominal prices. I bought two pairs, and I think my pair at the Crystal Palace last year was the only pair exhibited at any show. One of my four died, and the other three were improving daily, until one unlucky morning when the door of the aviary was left unfastened, and they escaped, together with some thirty other foreigners, not one of which I was able to re-capture. I should be glad to pay several times the 1895 price for some more Red-sided Tits, but I have not been able to find any since losing my own. They are most interesting birds in an aviary, and after they have got over their first troubles are not at all difficult to keep, *always providing the door is not left open.*

Classes 112 and 114 were worth a day's journey to see. Such a collection of beautiful rarities was surely never before got together, and fully proved that among the foreign bird owners there are plenty who will exhibit their acquisitions for our edification and instruction if reasonable classification and prize-money be offered.

Referring back to "distinctive marks;" while I am sure it would be the last wish of Mr. Humphrys to show his birds in "distinctive" cages, yet I must take exception to Mr. Seth-Smith's appreciation of the "very roomy cage" in which Mr. Russell Humphry's Garrulous Honey-eaters were shown. I did not measure the cage in question, but it approached nearer to the dimensions of a compartment of a railway carriage than to a reasonable show cage, and in close competition would in some minds give the impression that the cage unduly drew the attention of the judge. I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not agree with the too frequently expressed opinions that judges are influenced by "distinctive" marks, but at the same time, I would deprecate the showing of birds in

cages which could possibly give rise to such insinuations. A show cage is not necessarily a cage in which a bird can be permanently kept, and I certainly think it should be as unobtrusive as possible. I am thoroughly in accord with the principle of showing one's birds to the best advantage, but this principle can be overdone.*

The Pectoral Rail shown in this class is distinctly not a cage-bird. I have already occupied so much space that I will refrain from commenting on the criticisms on the Parrot classes.

HENRY J. FULLJAMES.

BARBARY DOVES, ETC.

SIR,—I have often read that the young of various foreign Doves can be reared with very little trouble by placing the eggs under Barbary Doves and allowing the latter to hatch them and rear the young. It is said that they do not discover the fraud, but bring up the nestlings as though they were their own. A popular writer on aviculture mentions a case in which no less than seventeen young Crested Doves were brought up in one year by Barbary Doves. Perhaps my experience of two pairs of the latter [illegible]s, which I kept for a short time in order to try them as foster-parents [illegible]oung Vinaceous Doves, may be of interest, and perhaps act as a [illegible]ng to some members who "go in for" the *Columbidæ*.

My old pair of Vinaceous Turtle-doves have reared a number of young in their time, and it would have been far better if I had let them bring up all their own young last year; but I was tempted to try the above experiment, with the following unfortunate results.

A friend having two pairs of Barbary Doves to dispose of, I purchased them, and gave each pair a separate place, in which they very soon went to nest. One pair laid on precisely the same date as the Vinaceous Doves, so I took their eggs away and substituted the eggs of the latter, which were duly hatched. Everything seemed to go well with them until they had got well fledged, when the Barbarys apparently discovered that a trick had been played upon them, and forthwith discontinued to feed the youngsters, which consequently died.

The next pair of eggs laid by the hen Vinaceous Dove were given to the other pair of Barbarys, but with precisely the same result.

I don't know whether the Collared birds had reared young of their own before coming into my possession, if not it is just possible that they would have treated their own youngsters the same; but this is highly improbable, and as both pairs behaved in the same way, it seems probable that they discovered that the little mites were impostors. I believe Barbary Doves have often brought up the young of the Australian Crested Pigeon *(Ocyphaps lophotes)* and, if I remember aright, Mr. Housden told [illegible] that he had successfully reared a very interesting hybrid between a [illegible]bayan Turtle-dove (*T. senegalensis*) and a domestic Pigeon, by placing [illegible]egg under a Barbary Dove, and my failure to rear Vinaceous Doves by [illegible]is means is the more unaccountable, as the latter species is very closely

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* Exhibitors have often been found fault with for showing their birds in too small cages—it seems hard that they should now be complained of for showing them in too large ones.—ED.

allied to *T. risorius*, and only a shade smaller: whereas, the Crested Doves (or Pigeons) are very distantly related.

This question is of interest to a very few members, and I must apologise for having taken up valuable space with it, but a member recently suggested rearing Parrakeets in this way, and it will be as well to consider whether Barbary Doves may be depended upon to bring up other *Doves* before trying the experiment with so widely distinct a race as the *Psittacidæ*.

D. SETH-SMITH.

BREEDING OF GREEN SINGING FINCHES.

SIR,—The February number of the Magazine contains a note by Mr. Catleugh on the above subject, in which he apparently claims to be the only successful breeder of Green Singing Finches. Possibly this may be literally true, but I have had an interesting experience in this connection which I will relate.

When I first stocked our aviary—which readers will remember is a garden one without any artificial heat—I bought two Green and two Grey Singing Finches, hoping that each two would prove a pair. No nesting took place the first summer, and in the following winter one of each died. The survivors happened to be cock (Green) and hen (Grey). In early Spring these two became very friendly, and in due course a nest was built, eggs were laid and young hatched, and by about the middle of April two young ones left the nest—fine, strong young birds. Each year the same pair has produced the same result. Their nesting period is always very early, the young are always two in number and always grey, though lighter than the mother, and the young cocks have the streak over the eyes very plainly marked; they are fine singers, but apt to be quarrelsome in the breeding season. So far, I have not seen any disposition on the part of the young ones themselves to breed.

The nest is a very poor loosely-constructed structure—possibly due to the fact that it is built so early in the year, before building material is supplied—and is always placed in a bunch of gorse, quite close to the front wire of the aviary, so that the bird can be clearly seen sitting, and in fact the whole domestic life of the family is open to public observation. The first year, the first nest was poked out by some miscreant with his walking stick; the second year it was so slight that I had to put an old Hedge Sparrows' nest under it, and this quite swallowed it up, but the hen went on steadily with her incubation. This year there was one egg laid on the 23rd March. The birds are perfectly hardy, and in the keenest winter night will sleep on a curled scroll of iron-work which forms a bracket to support a roof-joist. I have sometimes taken away the bunch of gorse with which we ornament the bracket, hoping its removal would lead to the birds seeking a more sheltered position inside the house-place, but she would not budge, and so the gorse has been replaced to afford such protection as it may.

I can recommend these birds as being well worth keeping, for they require no special food—millet and canary seed with a little of Abrahams' soft food and plenty of fresh chickweed answering all their needs.

CHARLES L. ROTHERA.

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TESTIMONIAL.

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Testimonial from H. T. T. CAMPS, Esq., F.Z.S., the Parrot Judge at Crystal Palace.

Haddenham, Isle of Ely, Oct. 17th, 1896.

DEAR SIR,—Just a line to express my satisfaction of the admirable manner in which you have executed the work I have entrusted to you. I observe with pleasure the natural attitude of the birds, which undoubtedly is due to your knowledge of Natural History, an acquaintance of which must be a great acquisition to a Taxidermist.

Note the Address:

CHARLES P. ARTHUR,

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(Continued from page 2 of cover).

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THE

Avicultural Magazine.

BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. III.—No. 32. *All rights reserved.* JUNE, 1897.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Aviculturul Magazine* is sent free to Members monthly.

Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them. Dead birds cannot be received for identification or *post mortem* examination, on account of the risk of infection.

Bound Volumes of Vol. I. of the *Avicultural Magazine* can be obtained from the Secretary,-price 21/-; there are only a very few copies remaining. Bound copies of Vol. II. are now ready, price 6/- to members, 7/6 to non-members. Most of the monthly parts of Vols. I. and II. can still be obtained from the Secretary, unbound, price 6d. each; but No. 2 (December, 1894) and No. 4 (February, 1895), are out of print.

One of the candidates proposed for election last month withdrew his name before his election was complete.

The Executive Committee regret that the drawing by Mr. FROHAWK, has again to be postponed. The delay does not rest with the officers of the Society.

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(Continued on page 3 of cover).

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THE

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AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. III.—No. 32. *All rights reserved.* JUNE, 1897.

MY KINGFISHERS.

By CHARLES L. ROTHERA.

The bird which, more than any other, I pride myself on being able to keep successfully, is the Kingfisher. When first I introduced one into our pool aviary, I was told on all hands that the attempt to keep the bird in confinement was foredoomed to failure; that it was of so wild and retiring a nature that it would never settle down or take its food, and that it was cruel to try. I lost two or three, generally within a day or two or a week at most, and began to think my advisers must be right. But one day I was watching matters generally, when my man came up with a can of live fish and proceeded to empty it on to the shallow margin of the pool. While he was so engaged, the Kingfisher darted down on to the edge of the can and grabbed a fish, striking the man's hand as it made its swoop. I at once concluded that it would feed when it had the chance, and that the death of its predecessors must have been due to some inability to get the fish out of the pool although a considerable number had been put in, and that they would not resort to the food pan from which the Waders obtained their supplies and help themselves to raw meat or chopped worms.

I accordingly pondered the subject over, and concluded that the fish soon became aware of the presence of their natural enemy above them and sought places of shelter, of which the pool furnished unlimited provision in the rough stone work of the margin and island and the groups of water plants, and thus the birds could not obtain a sufficient supply of food.

I therefore constructed an open pan with perforated sides, about 18 inches in diameter and 6 inches deep, and floated it with corks so that it held about four inches of water. Into this a few live fish are thrown two or three times a day and the difficulty is at an end. I kept a pair of birds through the whole of the

very severe weather of January and February, 1895, though we were reduced to very great extremities once, by inability to obtain live fish, and the birds' reluctance to eat anything else, even dead sprats being carried about and only eaten at last in desperation.

Eventually, rats found their way into the aviary, and both my Kingfishers fell victims to their greedy ferocity.

It was a considerable time before I could replace them, but ultimately I obtained a fine cock bird which soon made himself at home, and so much so, that he will not brook the presence of a companion, and has killed off three in rapid succession. As I have mentioned in a previous communication, this propensity is one of the greatest difficulties the aviculturist has to contend with.

But it is not the only one. Among the birds that I obtained after the rats had been disposed of were two or three various Gulls and a pair of Lesser Bitterns—most interesting but retiring birds, these latter. They all evinced a marked preference for live minnow over raw beef, and there was soon a race among them which could secure the bowl first. The poor Kingfisher had hardly a look in, for if he got a fish he had to carry it away and kill it before he could swallow it; the others just sailed around the pan or sat on its edge and gorged themselves so long as there was a fish left—no wonder that the fecundity of fish has to be so remarkable!

The Gulls being pinioned and only able to swim were soon circumvented, but the Bitterns were quite a different kettle of fish. They flew on to the edge of the pan, and being extraordinarily light for their apparent size, could balance themselves there without oversetting it. The addition of a sloping coronet of net wire did not trouble them—they stood upon it with their big spreading feet, and stretching out a telescopic neck from between their high shoulders, reached out the fish without difficulty. Finally, it was found necessary to cut a wing, which completely cowed the birds and rendered them more retiring in their ways than ever. I never saw birds so spoilt by the operation.

The Kingfisher itself is an interesting bird, altogether beyond the beauty of its plumage. We have no other bird in the aviary that attracts so much attention from the general public. It is, however, extremely dirty in its habits, and in that respect an undesirable inmate; but this renders it a suitable companion at least for Gulls. It is a difficult bird to cater for, and eats voraciously, diving into the bowl and fetching out two or three fish

as long as the little finger, in quick succession. One evening, when watching the bird, I saw it suddenly fly upwards towards the roof as if it were bent on breaking its neck against the wire, but before reaching it, it as suddenly turned and darted with the rapidity of lightning headfirst into the pool, returning to the surface directly with a fish, which it carried to its favourite bough to dispose of. It had, in this action, exactly the appearance of a rocketing Pheasant or Grouse, that flies for some distance after being heavily hit, and I take it that the bird has an instinctive knowledge of the momentum that is necessary to carry it deep enough into the water to enable it to reach the fish it goes for. And this is very remarkable, for by the laws of optics the fish appears to be about one fourth nearer the surface than it actually is; but I cannot account for the upward flight before the dive in any other way.

The Kingfisher apparently invariably washes itself after taking a meal. It plunges two or three times in rapid succession into the pool—generally within range of the splash made by a light dripping cascade—and then sits and preens its feathers. I imagine that the process of killing the fish by beating its head against a bough or stone causes the feathers of the bird to be splashed with slimy moisture from the fish, and so renders ablution desirable or even necessary.

MY AVIARY AND BIRDS.

By the Rev. Thos. B. Gibson, A.M.

Perhaps no one ever began aviary-keeping for such a reason as I did, sometime in the spring of 1889. Of course, as a boy, I had the usual amount of successes and perhaps more than the usual amount of failures, with bird-pets; but these attempts exercised no great influence upon me, and when I did start an aviary, it came about unintentionally, in this way.

A Rosy-breasted Cockatoo had been sent to me, as a present; but it was not long before its noise, and the necessity of daily renewing its perches, drove me to the plan of constructing an aviary round a tree in the garden, for its future residence.

Probably I should have taken the bird inside when the hard weather came, but in October I was seized with a severe attack of typhoid fever and, consequently, the Cockatoo had to take his chance, though the winter was a severe one. Being well looked after by a man about the place, he not only survived, but improved in appearance. Since that time neither he nor any of my birds has been taken inside, no matter what the weather

may be, though the aviary is totally unheated, and yet they are infinitely superior in health and feather to birds of the same kind carefully attended to in heated aviaries.

My aviary was easily made, thus:—I planted eight posts around the tree, and nailed short pieces in a sloping position from these posts to the tree. This cap I roofed in with wood, and then covered the wood with tarred felt. Next I nailed wire netting, narrow in mesh, all round the posts down to the ground, except between two of the posts, where I left an opening, about three feet high, in which I afterwards placed a door, made also of netting attached to a frame. Then, as additional security, as well as for shelter, I boarded over the netting at the base and top for about nine inches. No other protection has ever been given to my birds, and as there are very many kinds in the aviary I can exercise no particular control over their food, each being free to indulge his fancy. There is always sufficient food placed fresh in the aviary, together with clean water at least once a day. Hemp, canary seed, millet, rape, wheat and maize are the only seeds used; nothing else is given except a basinful of bread soaked in milk, fresh every morning, with occasional treats of groundsel, chickweed, plantain and water-cress. I have never troubled to soak the bread in water, or to squeeze out the alum. I notice that bread soaked in milk is preferred by all birds—for all eat it when fresh—to bread soaked in water.

With regard to bathing, some birds are inordinately fond of it, and all enjoy it whilst the water is clean. Starlings would bathe twenty times a day if you gave them fresh baths so often; and the same may be said of Bramble-finches and Missel-Thrushes, though Song-thrushes and Fieldfares are not so persistent. Bullfinches and Chaffinches too are fond of bathing, as are also most of the Bunting family, except the Common or Corn Bunting; but I have never seen Sparrows or Quails bathe, though both kinds delight in the sand heap as a substitute.

I purchased two Quails, both cocks, for I have never been able to obtain a hen, and though one killed itself against the wire the first night, the other still survives. This bird has, more than once, slipped out whilst the door was open; but it never seems to care about going away, and waits quietly outside till I catch it. It often gives the well-known Quail-call, but it has another kind of call, like the crowing of a cock, that I have never heard described by any observer.* My Californian Quails are beautiful but rather wild.

* The Chinese Quail has it also.—A. G. B.

Of the Crow family I have three kinds—the Starling, Jackdaw, and Jay. There are about a dozen Starlings in my aviary; though I would not keep so many were it not through fear of losing one I have had for five years, not being able to distinguish my favourite from the others except by his voice, which is superior to anything I had ever imagined in a Starling—for he imitates every bird in the aviary, and chuckles over his imitations when he has finished. This bird I obtained from a nest, having taken him while unfledged, and placed him in a cage which I then hung over the entrance to the nest. The old birds attended to him for about a month, when I placed him in the aviary. The others were only admitted to save their lives in a hard winter.

It is very singular that my Starlings have never bred in the aviary, though some of them have been almost reared in it. My one Jackdaw was also reared by its mother in my aviary. My Jay was a purchase from England*: he is not much of a mimic, but is a beautiful bird, and quicker in his movements than any other with which I am acquainted. I feared that the smaller birds would have no chance of breeding in the same aviary with him, and so built another aviary in a sunnier spot, which has been quite successful. In building this, I took advantage of the angle between two walls, so that there was perfect shelter from N. winds, and the wire netting was only on the S. side. I also boarded more than half the flooring of the aviary in a sloping manner, so that the birds have always got dry footing to rest on below as well as on the perches. I also placed a number of boxes, cocoa-nuts, etc., in suitable positions for nesting, but here, as in the other aviary, my birds greatly preferred their own to my arrangements. Not many, however, constructed nests or laid eggs, except a pair of Bullfinches and a pair of Budgerigars, these latter being indefatigable in that way.

Of the Warbler family, I have only kept four, and one of these, a Stonechat, only lived with me for a few days. A Wheatear, however, lived for about two months, and I had an opportunity of watching the peculiar movements of its tail and the spreading out of its wings whilst it sang. The Robin I possess is so wild, that after two years residence with me, whenever I go inside, it creeps under the boarding and remains in hiding till I have left. I purchased a pair of Hedge Sparrows or Hedge Accentors, but the hen died in less than a week. The survivor has astonished me with the beauty of its song: after a time it became quite tame, and

* The writer of this article resides in Ireland.—Ed.

would allow me to stroke it down, scarcely moving away when I placed my face close to it. The peculiar shuffling of its wings seems to be involuntary.

Of Doves I have several kinds—the common Ring-dove, the Turtle-dove, the Stock-dove, the White Japanese Dove, and the Egyptian Dove, the latter being like the common Ring-dove but suffused with a rosy hue all over the body. Last year the Stock-doves brought out one young Dove, as did also the Ring-doves, but both young birds have died. This year the former have reared a beautiful pair of young ones. In the early summer, one of the most singular spectacles possible to imagine was to be seen in the aviary: for, in a very capacious nest on a tree branch, there were six Doves' eggs, and on this nest, seated in harmony, a Turtle, a Japanese, and common Ring-dove, though only one nestling survived.

Very lately I obtained a Magpie, which, with the Jay, I had to move from the larger aviary, as, on the very first night of its residence, it killed two Thrushes and a Sparrow.

As in the case of the Starling, it is fear of losing a magnificent songster which prevents me from releasing or giving away one of my four Blackbirds. And a like cause, in part, operates with me as regards Thrushes, of which I have eleven—nine being Song-thrushes (mostly caught in the cold weather), the others being the Missel-thrush and a Fieldfare. I have, too, a very fine Ring Ouzel, but being a late purchase I cannot say much about its habits, except that it is very tame, having been brought up by hand. The Song-thrushes have always built nests and laid eggs, but the hatching has been intermittent, and no young birds have been reared. The Missel-thrush has surprised me by the delicacy of its throat-notes, for though the five or six notes of its usual song are shrill enough, it loves to come beside me (either when inside or outside the aviary) and to give utterance to the softest of tones, deep down in its throat, as if it were whispering a song, while all the while it turns its head to look into my eyes, as if noting the effect.

Of the Fieldfare I cannot say much, as it was only captured lately. It is, however, a beautiful bird, and though its voice, as far as I know, is unmusical, its elegant shape and bluish-grey colour, together with its peculiarly tipped beak make it an ornament to the aviary.

In this my first aviary, there are several Sparrows, who are the very wildest of its denizens. One is rather a rarity,

having two white feathers in each wing. Of the Larks I have had several; but only one ever distinguished himself as a songster, and he died during a hard winter. All my Larks, after a short time in the aviary, are perfectly well able to perch. Of Titmice, I have only kept the Great or Ox-eye Titmouse and the smaller Bluecap. I did not greatly care for the former, as it more than once broke the eggs of a Canary that had paired with a Siskin. I never heard it sing, and it usually was in a state of chattering wrath either with me or some denizen of the aviary. It was interesting, though, to watch the manner in which it held a grain of hempseed in its claw to peck at, always flying with a single grain to a particular spot. The Blue Bonnet is a more satisfactory bird and quite as amusing: he loves anything in the way of fat, and appears fond of water; but has not yet nested with me. The Common Linnet is very easily kept in captivity, and is not liable to diseases. The song is very sweet, and it continues the music until very late in the evening. The Twite I have found very hard to keep, and I cannot recommend this species as being so satisfactory as either the Linnet or Redpoll. Of this latter species I have had four, for about five years, and I am able to disprove a statement in regard to its colour, which maintains that the captive bird having lost the red colour never recovers it in captivity. I once had a large Mealy Redpoll, but it was hanged through being entangled in a piece of twine. None of these birds ever began to build a nest, nor have I noticed any inclination to pair, though I always keep my birds in pairs when possible.

The Greenfinch is quite hardy, but not easily made *quite* tame. It and the Bullfinch are very fond of a branch in bud. This latter is a prime favourite with me, and my pair can hardly be tamer. They have built a nest, but the young died. The nest was loosely made, some of the hairs having been obtained from my beard. The hen, but not the cock, can pipe a few bars of "Pop goes the weasel."

My Hawfinches are very healthy but uninteresting, and the voice coming from such a beak is ludicrous.

The Crossbills are my favourite birds; and one, an incessant songster, is very tame and affectionate. I prefer it to anything, almost everything, else I have got.

BIRDS EASY TO TAME.

By A. G. Butler, Ph. D., etc.

As there are some birds which are naturally of a quarrelsome disposition, although individuals may occur which are exceptionally pacific; as also there are birds which rarely or never dispute, or which confine their differences to members of their own species; so also there are birds which are of a trustful and docile nature, appreciative of kindness and always ready to make friends with their recognized keeper.

Among our British birds, when caught wild and turned into an aviary, I have found most soft-billed birds more or less easy to tame after their first moult; but there are some species which become confiding long before that—the Robin and Stonechat and the female of the Grey Wagtail having taken mealworms from my fingers in less than a week after they came into my possession. The Blue-tit is a very trustful little bird and soon learns to know its owner and take liberties with him; but of all the Finches I have only found the Siskin really friendly in a short time; one pair having flown down to my hand three days after I purchased them.

When kept in cages many birds appear to be tame long before they really are so. A birdcatcher once brought me a fine Goldfinch, in one of those diabolical cages about the size of a match-box; he had kept it thus confined for a year or two and prided himself upon its tameness; for, however terrified the poor bird might be when he poked his finger at it, there was no way of escape; so that it simply crouched without fluttering. The man told me he was hard up and offered me the bird for three shillings, and, pitying the poor captive, I bought it and turned it into a large flight cage: never before or since have I owned so wild a Goldfinch!

At the same time, when a bird is fresh caught, too much liberty at first often retards the taming process: I have tamed Blackbirds in three or four days by keeping them in a cage where they were compelled always to face me when feeding, and where they had no room to knock themselves to pieces; then, finding them docile, I gave them greater liberty: yet all Blackbirds will not thus be tamed, but remain more or less wild until after the autumn moult.

Among foreign birds, the Blue Robin, so-called, and the Pekin Nightingale so mis-called, are the quickest to recognise their owners; whilst, among the Finches, the American Non-

pareil, the Bengalee, the Green Cardinal, and the Red-crested Finch are among the tamest, home-reared Cut-throats are, however, perhaps the most confiding of all foreign finches which I have had.

Some Doves, but more especially the common Barbary Dove, become a perfect nuisance from their friendliness, settling upon your head directly you enter the aviary where they are, and returning as fast as you lift them off; but others never seem to become really tame; although, after the lapse of time, they show less fear than at first.

The tiny Chinese Quails, which at first are very nervous, and fly against the roof at the risk of broken necks when you enter their domains, gradually learn to moderate their timidity and merely trot out of your way; also, when you are once outside the wirework, they will run like chicken to eat any dainty—such as a cockroach—which you throw in for them.

To be a pleasure to their owners, birds should be tame; half the charm of my lovely specimen of the Pileated Jay consists in the fact that he will take food from my fingers, and will sing and dance to me. On the other hand, birds which never get tame, like some of the Cardinals when in large aviaries, or the Cowbirds and Troupials, are a constant source of irritation: however beautiful a bird may be, if it rattles about in extreme terror, and imagines you are going to murder it whenever you approach its aviary, you feel that you can never make a friend of it—and resolve, when you part with it or it dies, never to have another of its species.

REVIEW.

Animals at Work and Play, by C. J. Cornish (Seeley & Co., Ltd.)

Mr. Cornish's books are always delightful, and this is no exception to the rule. We cannot notice half the good things about birds to be found in it, and would recommend our readers to get the book themselves.

Mr. Cornish appears not to know the difference between Budgerigars and Love-birds, and seems half inclined to credit the old fable that they die of grief after the loss of their mate. And they are not "delicate birds," as he says they are.

The chapter on "The Soaring of Birds," though it contains nothing new, is well worth reading. And the same may be said of that on "Birds Lost in Storms."

"The writer was informed that some years ago, at a hawking party

on Salisbury Plain, a falcon was flown at a carrion-crow, which it struck after a long flight, and the two birds came down like a parachute to the ground. The party galloped up, and were about to dismount to take up the falcon, when the mate of the crow suddenly descended from a great height, with such velocity that the wings made a whizzing sound like that of a falling stone, and dashed on to the falcon. The force of the blow struck the hawk from its quarry, which was uninjured by the grapple in the air; and both crows flew off unhurt into a copse near."

We cannot quite understand Mr. Cornish's statement that birds swallow grit as a medicine. Grit in the stomach is necessary to the proper digestion of seeds, for birds cannot masticate, having no teeth. We understand a medicine to be something taken to cure an unhealthy condition, and the word is inappropriate to a thing taken regularly, when the bird is in good health, to enable it to assimilate its food.

The chapters on migration are chiefly noticeable for the very interesting account of the late Mr. Seebohm's discoveries in the valleys of the Petchora and the Yenisei. There, in Siberia, within the Arctic circle, he found the long sought breeding place of the Grey Plover and some other species, and revealed a perfect paradise of birds where literally millions of the feathered race go every spring to rear their young and feed upon the immense store of the previous year's berries, strangely preserved through the winter by the snow.

"The Animal View of Captivity" contains some very sound observations, and we wish it could be read by all those who talk hysterically about the cruelty of keeping birds in captivity.

"What makes the happiness of wild animals? The question is not very easily answered. The abstract idea of liberty certainly does not enter into it in the case of the greater number. . . . . Within certain limits they are free to choose their life, and presumably they choose that which pleases them best. In nearly every case this is one of pure routine. It consists in the daily repetition of a very limited series of actions, the greater number of which seem to give them satisfaction rather than pleasure, but make up in the aggregate the sum of animal happiness. . . . . It may be doubted whether, if the food supply were plentiful and constant, animals or birds would ever care to move beyond the circle in which they can find enough for their daily wants. . . . It may be doubted if a Zoo sparrow has ever visited Hyde Park, or whether, if the caged birds were given their liberty, they would leave the Gardens."

Of all the chapters in the book we most enjoy that entitled "Homes for Wild Birds," and will conclude with a quotation from it.

"Most birds that build in holes can be easily attracted by anything like a box with a hole in the side. Woodpeckers, nuthatches and wrynecks nearly always prefer to hollow out a hole for themselves; and a few dead

branches, or even dead trees left in the garden, will nearly always attract one or the other. The wrynecks always like a dead willow better than any other tree. If there is a pond, waterhens are sure to know of it, for they are great travellers, especially at night; and a pair are almost certain to take possession of it if there are one or two bushes on the bank with boughs just touching the water, so that they may form a basis for the floating nest. But the birds most wanted in a garden are all those warblers which come to us during the spring and summer. They are the most useful, for they are exclusively insect-eaters, and the most charming, for, except the chiff-chaff, they all sing sweetly. They can be won over with ease, for they come to us on purpose to nest; and every cock-bird that arrives selects some pleasant spot where his mate, when he has won her by out-singing his rivals, can build her nest. The redstart, the most beautiful of them all, will nest in the boxes; the black-cap and garden-warbler, the best songsters after the nightingale, are very fond of bramble bushes, and a few long runners planted in a corner of a shrubbery will soon find a tenant. The nightingales are harder to entice, for they insist on thicker covert, if possible in the neighbourhood of oak trees, with the dead leaves of which the nest is always finished; but they may be invited by keeping a piece of coppice or clump of shrubs cut low, and so forcing them to grow close and bushy. It is by no means necessary that the spot shall be a retired one, for small birds during the nesting season are almost indifferent to man. The writer knew of a nightingale which nested in a window-box, and has found many nests within a few feet of a path. Only one precaution need be observed—the birds must not be frequently disturbed, nor the eggs handled."

AVICULTURAL SMALL-TALK.

In the "Small-Talk" for February, aviculturists were warned against feeding Alario Finches on millet, and last month, in Mr. Fillmer's article on the species, this warning was repeated. It must not, however, be imagined that millet-seed is in itself injurious to these birds, but merely that having acquired a taste for it they frequently eat it in preference to more nourishing seeds. Dr. Butler possesses a male Alario Finch which has lived in one of his aviaries for nearly nine years, and has always had access to an unlimited supply of millet; so that it does not invariably bring about their untimely death. Nevertheless, we believe that Dr. Butler's bird is the exception which proves the rule, and that the experience of most aviculturists who have kept Alario Finches with Waxbills and other millet eating birds is that they seldom live for more than a year or two.

The Chinese Quail is a bird which ought to become popular. The male is decidedly pretty, and they are most inoffensive little creatures, and apparently very hardy. Living, as they do, entirely on the floor of the aviary, they are almost unnoticed by the other occupants, and thus while they increase the population of the aviary they do not make it more crowded. They speedily become very tame.

The late Mr. Erskine Allon was to have contributed an article on the Grey Singing Finch to our "Fringillinæ" series. He had bred the species

with considerable success. The Honorary Secretary would be glad to hear from any member willing to write on this bird.

Our readers will doubtless have observed that the Magazine, whi contained twenty pages each month for the first six numbers of the curr volume, has last month and this month fallen back again to its old size sixteen pages. The reason for this is that while copy comes in to t Editor fairly abundantly in the winter, during the summer months the is a difficulty in obtaining articles. Will the members kindly bear in min that anything which they write for the Magazine will be specially valued if sent in during the next few months?

The recent large increase in the membership of the Society is very gratifying, and reflects great credit upon the members who secured the new recruits. Their success will doubtless spur them on to fresh exertions. It is believed that the coloured plates are much appreciated and have been the inducement to many to join the Society. We regret, however, that the Secretary reports an unusually large number of resignations.

With regard to the article by the late Mr. Allon which appeared la month, and his observations upon the character and disposition of vari species, it would be well to bear in mind that he kept some hundreds of birds flying loose together in one room, and that their behaviour under such conditions would be likely to differ considerably from what it would be in a less crowded aviary. We are not for a moment suggesting that Mr. Allon's bird-room was over-crowded in such a way as to be injurious to the health of the birds, but it certainly must have been over-crowded to an extent sufficient to modify the habits of its inmates. This fact does not detract from the value of his observations, but it helps to explain why he frequently differs from other observers.

Many of the County Councils throughout the country have availed themselves of the powers given to them by the Wild Birds Protection Acts, 1894 and 1896, and the effect of their initiative is that over a large part of England all the warblers and many other harmless insectivorous species may not be taken, even by the owners or occupiers of the land. It is somewhat a misfortune that the law on the subject should vary in different counties, and a still greater misfortune that it should be so very involved and difficult to understand and remember—but it seems to be the duty of aviculturists to make themselves masters of it as it exists in the counties in which they reside, and to do their best to help in its enforcement. We would not suggest that our members should turn themselves into a vigilance committee or act as informers, but they might do much go by keeping an eye on bird catchers, bird dealers and others, and if th find them infringing the law, give them a friendly warning "not to d it again" unless they wish to be reported to the police.

As an instance of what has been done it may be useful to take one district. The East Sussex County Council have passed a resolution, which will doubtless be carried into effect by an order of the Secretary of State,

and which will then, within East Sussex (1) extend the close-time for all birds (except Wild Swan, Wild Geese, Mallard, Widgeon, Teal and other wild ducks, Woodcock, Snipe, Lapwing, Plover, Godwit, Redshank, and other sandpipers, Curlew, and Whimbrel) from the 1st to the 31st of August. The close-time for all birds, except those named, will be from the beginning March to the end of August. (2) Add the following species to the scheduled" birds, the penalty for killing, taking, or exposing for sale any which is £1, and which are protected even against the owners and occupiers of the land:—Wryneck, Swallow, Martin, Swift, Bearded Tit, Red-backed Shrike, Kestrel, Hobby, Buzzard, Honey Buzzard, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Raven, Kentish Plover, Bustard, Black-headed Bunting, Corn Bunting, Yellow-hammer, Cirl Bunting, Reed Bunting, Snow Bunting, Flycatcher (both species), Hawfinch, Hedge-sparrow, Landrail, Merlin, Nuthatch, Redstart, Stonechat, Long-tailed Tit, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Marsh Tit, Crested Tit, Tree-sparrow, Wagtails (all species), Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Dartford Warbler, Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Wood Warbler, Wheatear, Whinchat, Fire-crested Wren, Gold-crested Wren. (3) Protect the following species during the whole of the ear:—Oriole, Chough, Kingfisher, Hoopoe, Dartford Warbler, Bearded Tit, uzzard, Honey Buzzard, Hedge-sparrow, Osprey, Common Kite, Nightjar, Woodpecker (3 species), White Owl, Bittern, Spoonbill, Stone Curlew, Avocet, Great Crested Grebe, Goldfinch, Crossbill, Woodlark, Pied Flycatcher, Little Bittern, Siskin, Redpoll, Tree-sparrow, Wheatear, and Raven.

CORRESPONDENCE.

BREEDING OF GREEN SINGING FINCHES.

SIR,—In the first paragraph of a letter from Mr. Charles L. Rothera in the May Number, *re* "Breeding of Green Singing Finches," he writes that in my article to the *Avicultural Magazine* of February last I "apparently claim to be the only successful breeder of these birds."

As I know but very few of our members, it would have been most conceited on my part to lay claim to that honour, not knowing what the remaining ninety-eight per cent. of members had done.

Considering that these birds bred as readily with me as Zebra Finches did, I did not imagine that the occurrence of their successful nesting was at all rare, until I had a letter from our Secretary, in which he said, "I want an article on the Green Singing Finch for the Fringillinæ series, and as you seem to be the only member who has bred the species, I want you to write it." I naturally concluded from this, that the circumstance of their breeding was a little out of the common, and I commenced my remarks by aving almost word for word this part of the letter that I had received.

W. T. CATLEUGH.

I am not aware of any of our members besides Mr. Catleugh having successfully reared the Green Singing Finch in captivity. If this assumption is wrong, I should be very glad to hear from the other breeders.

H. R. FILLMER.

THE TUI.

SIR,—I was interested in Mr. Wiener's letter about the Tui. When residing in New Zealand some years ago, I bought a pair from a native, and kept them for some months. They were easily tamed and used to fly about the room. They were amusing mimics of sounds and movements. The hen escaped through an open window one day, and I never saw her again. The cock I had for some time after, but he escaped at last, and when he found himself in a fuchsia tree opposite my windows, he became so happy that he declined to return at any price. I fed them entirely upon boiled potatoes mashed up finely with plenty of sugar, and they were perfectly healthy.

T. B. WHYTEHEAD.

GOULDIAN FINCHES.

SIR,—I think, perhaps, my experience with a pair of the above may be of interest to some of our members. I have but the two—a red-faced cock and black-faced hen. The former has been an inmate of my cages for about two years, the latter eight months. To begin with, they are in a cage very much over-crowded, and in the ever-varying temperature of a kitchen, with windows North Polewards only. The inmates of their cage include such restless creatures as Weavers. Yet, I have not only kept them in perfect health under the conditions stated, but bred them—with what success you shall hear.

From 4th November, 1896, to 3rd March, 1897, twenty eggs were laid as follows:—4th to 7th November, 4 eggs; 7th to 10th December, 4 eggs; 4th to 6th January, 3 eggs; 18th to 21st January, 3 eggs; 25th to 31st January, 3 eggs; 22nd to 23rd February, 2 eggs; 3rd March, 1 egg. During the above periods the hen never drooped a wing, or shewed any signs of egg-binding.

The whole of the second clutch hatched-out, two dead and two alive. On the morning of 24th December, a little dead body was found immediately under the Gouldians nest. On Christmas morning this was repeated. Not finding one on Boxing Day, my curiosity was too intense to put off having a look into the nest. With the aid of artificial light and a little straining, I discovered a little *living* body and one egg. On the 28th, the young—for the other hatched-out alive, on the 27th I presume—were making themselves heard when being fed. To my utter dismay the parents were pairing again on the following day (29th) so I felt sure the young would be deserted or thrown from the nest. My fear happily proved groundless, and the mites continued to make themselves heard, and the dutiful parents to feed admirably. The 4th January saw one egg deposited beside the young, and two more added in as many days, completed clutch three. These eggs I witnessed being pushed from the nest on the 16th, and two days later, clutch four was commenced, and consisted of the same number. But the feeding of the young was never neglected by either parent. It would be interesting to learn whether other members have had the experience of seeing this Finch lay and rear their young at the same time. Some will put it down to over-stimulation, but they could not have had a more simple diet—consisting as it did of white millet and blue maw soaked, millet in the ear, and egg food made of stale sponge cake and yolk of hard-boiled egg.

I had the pleasure of seeing a young Gouldian leave the nest on 21st

January, an example followed by its little companion the next day (26 days' old). The wings only were feathered, the bodies being quite bare, and would not impress the most ardent bird-lover with their beauty. Canaries leaving the nest at such a season, and similarly clad, would have little ance of surviving. Simultaneously with the young leaving the nest did e throwing-out of clutch four commence. This was pleasing, as the arents would thus be able to devote their whole time to the young, who, this time, would not stay in the warm nest, most of their time being spent flying after one or other of the parents, beseeching to be fed. The nother was more often applied to. The 5th February saw the young feeding themselves (41 days old); three days later, through a vexatious accident, one got drowned. All went well with the sole survivor, until 3rd March, when it was apparent that all was not right. At first a pair of Pintail Nonpareils, which came into my possession on 24th February, were blamed for its indisposition. They having, just previously, taken a "ticket" at the Palace, were not subjected to the term of quarantine imposed upon all strangers whose past history is unknown to me. My suspicion was much strengthened by the male Pintail dropping dead on 7th March, followed, I much regret to write, by my young Gouldian on the 8th, being then 72 days old. Up to the 3rd, I never felt the least anxiety on its account, being always sprightly, and in the best of health. I never doubted being able to preserve it.

Mr. J. E. Dewar, of this City, to whom I gave its little body, certified the cause of death as inflammation of the lungs, evidently caused by a chill, and this is quite possible for it often bathed in cold water, and I may be wrong in blaming the Nonpareils.*

The male bird is presently moulting, but both are in the best of health, and show no signs of being the very delicate subjects they are so generally reputed to be. They are my first favourites, and the last I would part with of all my collection, which is at present somewhat numerous.

Could any of our members tell me whether by preventing birds nesting during our Winter (their Summer) would they nest during our Summer (their Winter). If so, this would be a huge stride towards success.

ALFRED EDWARD NICHOLSON.

THE VIOLET-EARED WAXBILL; FOOD FOR MYNAHS.

SIR,—As they have been very scarce in England, I think some account of my Violet-eared Waxbills may be of interest. I had had one pair, and one or two odd birds, but for the last few years this kind have been very difficult to obtain even here in Madeira; last Autumn, however, I was fortunate enough to get from one of the passing steamers, four pairs, all very beautiful birds in splendid condition. I put each pair into a separate good-sized cage, giving them a roomy nest basket. Early in February they began to build, and worked very hard. One of the hens laid four eggs, but made not the slightest pretence at sitting; after ten days she laid four more eggs, but took no notice of these either. Another hen laid two eggs, then she and the male bird took turns at sitting, and relieved

*We really cannot see what ground Mr. Nicholson ever had for supposing the young Gouldian died of an infectious complaint, caught from the Nonpareils. The young bird must have been sickly from the beginning, or it would not have left the nest naked.—ED.

each other with the greatest regularity through the day—in the evening, however, they both retired to a perch at some distance from the nest and spent the night there.

I then let these two pairs of birds loose in a large out-door aviary where they are busy building, but I fear will show no inclination to sit. I have still two pairs in the house (one of the hens has laid three eggs) and am carefully watching their movements, but fear the result will be much the same. I should be very glad if any readers of the Magazine would kindly tell me if they have had similar experience, or if they could suggest anything which would be likely to induce the birds to sit. The Violet-eared Waxbills are, in my opinion, the most beautiful of all the smaller birds, and they become so perfectly tame in a few weeks that they are a constant delight to their owners; mine will all come and take small mealworms, ants' eggs, or little sprays of feathery grass for building, from my hand, and those which I have let loose in the aviary are just as tame there as they were in cages, they fly to me the moment I enter. They are, above all, most contented happy little birds; the hens sing a sweet soft little song as well as the males; one of my hens has wonderful imitative powers, and soon picked up the song of the Avadavats, and the clear call note of the Cordon-bleu, so that we have named her "the little mocking-bird," and she is a great pet.

To go to another subject, if I may take up so much space. I should be very grateful for advice as to the treatment of a Mynah—mine will not eat meat, either cooked or uncooked, or mealworms, or insects of any kind, neither does he care for fruit; he likes yolk of egg and bread and milk, and will eat a little potato, but it seems to me such a big strong bird should have something more sustaining.* L. C. REID. (Madeira).

DOVES AND JACKDAWS.

SIR,—I recently put up a hollow log in a large ash tree in my garden in the hope of attracting owls. In this I was not successful; but a pair of Jackdaws commenced a nest in it. I noticed that the material taken in by the Jackdaws had gone, and the daws themselves appeared to have left the neighbourhood. The opportunity appeared to be a suitable one for stopping up a hole at the otherwise solid end of the log; which permitted the wind to blow through it. On going up to it I could see some fibrous building material, of a much finer nature than is selected by daws. While peering in at the hole (which was only about three inches by two inches, I was startled by a Pigeon flying out at the open end. A pair (no doubt Stock Doves) have been about, and often in the tree for some time past. It would appear that the Stock Doves must have destroyed the foundation of the daws nest and driven them away.

Can any of our members corroborate or otherwise explain the occurence? CHAS. LOUIS HETT.

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* I have kept several species of Mynah; they will feed on insectivorous and so food of almost any and every kind. But perhaps a Hill Mynah is referred to. I have h the Larger and Smaller Hill Mynahs: they should be fed on cooked vegetables, fruit, eg raisins and slops generally. In this country they seem to require a little meat, but it sh not be forced upon them; probably in a hot climate they are better without it.

As regards the Waxbills. When birds lay but do not sit, it is usually because the house is too small or too much exposed. Put them into a large place, provide them with suitable *private* nesting arrangements, do not disturb them, and they will probably sit all right.—R.P.

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION.

Mr. WALTER HOUGHTON, Lowerhead Row, Leeds.
Proposed by Mr. ALLBUT.

Mr. ALAN TATE, 229, Allen Street, Sheffield.
Proposed by Mr. O'REILLY.

Mr. C. D. ROTCH, The High House, Brook Green, W.
Proposed by Dr. BUTLER.

Mr. WALTER GOODFELLOW, 14, Avenue Carnot, Champs Elysée, Paris.
Proposed by Mrs. HARTLEY.

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The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 6 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable.*

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to members monthly. Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them.

The Magazine is published by Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Limited, of 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., and is dispatched by them monthly to the members. Orders for extra copies, back numbers, and bound volumes should be addressed to them and not to the Secretary.

As has been previously announced, it is intended to issue, this year, a series of four hand-coloured plates, similar in style to those which appeared last year. The first plate of the series appeared in December, and the second this month. Members who wish for these *coloured* plates will be asked to pay an extra subscription of 5/-, and, as an additional privilege, will have all their Magazines dispatched by letter-post, and protected by a sheet of straw-board.

The circular issued with the May Magazine resulted in 66 members voting for the proposal to raise the subscription and issue coloured plates to all members without extra charge, while only 11 voted against it. The Council have therefore by a unanimous vote altered rule 3 by the substitution of "7/6" for "5/-"—this alteration to take effect after the 31st October next.

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(Continued on page 3 of cover).

THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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THE LAST STRAW.

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

Most of our readers will be familiar with the story of the cockney who, on paying a visit in the country, was given a freshly laid egg for breakfast, with the triumphant remark from his hostess that he didn't get such eggs as that in London. "Haw," answered the cockney, "but it hasn't the *flavour* that our London eggs have." There is no accounting for tastes, and use is second nature, as the following story will further show.

Here in London, many are the noises that disturb our slumbers; what with the barking of dogs, the caterwauling of cats, and the crowing of cocks, we need a little acclimatising before we can enjoy a good night's rest. Around this neighbourhood, moreover, we have other helpful influences to accustom us to any and every row, such as the racing of early milk carts, the whistling of locomotives, and the much louder, screechier steam whistles at various works which, in the early morning, make life a burden to all but the heaviest sleepers.

I, in my time, have lent a helping hand in acclimatising my neighbours, esteeming the same to be a praiseworthy action; and virtue would have been its own reward if my neighbours had only been a little more appreciative. Common Mynahs can make a noise; Hill Mynahs can make many noises. Piping Crows have useful voices in this connection; four of these musical creatures, Black- and White-backed, have enlivened my garden, and welcomed the rising sun with the most joyous cries—not always melodious, three of them doing their duty manfully—the other womanfully. The labours of one of the former is still gratefully borne in mind by those around. On the other side of the garden wall was, and is, a Bantam that crowed lustily and shrilly; one of the White-backs, a splendid fellow, thought he could do one better, and would go up to that wall

and yell, and yell, and yell, until that wall ought to have tumbled down—but it didn't, it still remains in fact. In addition to these there have been Choughs and Crows, Hawks and Pies, Jay-Thrushes and Laughing-Thrushes, Bell-birds and Barbets, Parrots and Parrakeets, and countless others, all and several rising early and doing their little best, led by a grand old Raven who habitually commenced before dawn. Then there have been the birds who ofttimes turn night into day. Few sounds are more wearisome than the ceaseless bleat of the Godwits; and Curlews, Plovers, Oyster Catchers, and the like, all have their little whistles and voices; and when I say that I have had six different species of Owls in my garden here, I think I have said enough. Oh! the priceless value of the precious birds that I have parted with because of the want of an avicultural education amongst my neighbours!

Now, a few doors from this house there has been living these nineteen years, and still lives, a stalwart, broad-backed dame, who has kept our otherwise quiet street bountifully supplied with comely lads and lasses, these again carrying on the business on their own account—perambulators and babies still being common objects of their door-step. Evidently she is fairly well acclimatised. The noises of the boys, babies, steam-whistles, cats, dogs, cocks, etc., are, she says, natural noises, and she and her husband do not hear them. My birds, she declares, are her delight. She still has a lively remembrance of the Piping Crow above referred to. If she has pleasanter recollections of any one set of birds more than another it is of the Owls. She tells me she used to say to her spouse, "There are Mr. Phillipps' Owls screeching again; it is going to rain." * Such an one as this one might have supposed would have been equal to any noise; but no: the down-trodden worm has turned at last; the broad back has at length been broken; and the straw that did the mischief was———

The other evening this lady called and asked to see me. The following account of the interview is *very* feeble: I find myself quite unequal to the task of adequately reproducing the scene.—"Well, Mr. Phillipps, how long is this to go on?" I meekly begged to be informed to what she might refer. "To that horrible screeching noise made by that bird in your garden night and day it never stops." "Noise! noisy bird in my

* In many parts of the country, the cry of the Green Woodpecker is supposed to foretell rain; but I never before heard that the cry of any of our Owls has a similar vaticinal property.—R. P.

garden! surely there must be some mistake." "Mistake! oh, no; it is screaming all day and all night; we never have a moment's peace; it's perfectly dreadful; it's quite unbearable." "I really don't understand; besides, all my talking birds are shut up every night in the house, so that they may not disturb the neighbours in the mornings." "Oh! but there is some dreadful thing yelling and screaming all night long, and all day long too; it never stops. Hark! there it goes; that's it; what a horrible row! my husband can't sleep a wink, and it's DREADFUL, simply AWFUL." "That? that a noise? why, that's the song of the *Nightingale*." "Oh, no; I don't mean the *Nightingale* of course, but that great thing which screams and whistles all night long." Over and over again, but with lessening assurance, she declared that she didn't mean the Nightingale, that it wasn't a Nightingale, but some big screeching thing; Polly couldn't sleep, and Betsy cried, and her husband was worn out, etc., etc.

There are few things that give my wife and myself greater pleasure than this Nightingale. He is six years old, and has been in song since January; but, singularly enough, although singing all day, he had not commenced to sing at night until three nights previously. I had obtained a wife for him, and they seemed bent on nesting; our bed-room overlooks the aviary; and the notes of this bird (although not perfect, for it was hand-reared), in the midst of the bricks and mortar, are to country-bred persons like ourselves an exquisite delight. I enlarged upon the privilege she enjoyed of sleeping (without extra charge) within sound of the song of a Nightingale, of the heartless cruelty it would be to disturb such innocent birds while nesting, hinted at the absurdity of objecting to the song of a Nightingale, the theme of numberless poets, and suggested that when she told her husband and Betsy and Polly and all the rest of them that it was really a Nightingale, they would one and all declare that its notes were of the sweetest, and said that if she would bring them round in the day-time they should have the pleasure of feeding the bird out of their hands. She evidently thought that it would not sound well if it got abroad that they had objected to the song of a Nightingale, and beat as dignified a retreat as circumstances would permit.

Far different is the story of the * Trentham Nightingale. Two years ago, for the first time on record, a pair took up their abode in a clump in the park; and the miners and pottery-hands came in the evenings in their hundreds (I am told thousands)

* The Staffordshire seat of the Duke of Sutherland.—R. P.

from miles away, and passed the nights in the park, some lying on newspapers and the rest on the bare ground (it happened to be beautiful weather), for the special purpose of hearing the Nightingale sing. Clearly, they are more civilized in the Potteries than we are here in London. The Duke had the clump fenced round, and did all he could to prevent the birds from being disturbed; but they have not since returned to Trentham.

MY AVIARY AND ITS INMATES.

By W. T. Page.

I cannot lay claim to much experience in aviculture—though off and on for some years I have kept, in cages, miscellaneous collections—more as an amusement than for observation and study.

In September, 1895, I put up a small garden aviary, 15ft. long, 2½ft. wide, 6ft. high, part open and part covered in—with a small shelter shed at one end in addition, which the majority of the birds scarcely ever use.

Its inmates consist of Chaffinches, Greenfinches, Buntings, Canaries, Redpolls, Bramble Finches, Hedge Accentors, Sparrows, Grey Java Sparrows, Ribbon Finches, Black-faced Weavers, thirty-five in all, and they have lived together in complete harmony. As regards food, I give one hopper of mixed seeds as bought, and one each of canary and white millet—with a liberal daily supply of sunflower seed and ants' eggs on the ground, grit in tins, green food *ad lib.*, grass in flower, and mixed garden weeds—all stale green food being removed daily—this gives variety and also insect food, so essential in keeping Finches and Buntings in health—and I have proved one fact, not generally accepted by ornithologists—viz., that the above-named British birds *will greedily eat* the gooseberry grubs and mature moths *(Abraxas grossulariata)* as many as you choose to give them. In detail—

Sparrows I have found very interesting, though wild and noisy; their quiet beauty requires to be studied under aviary life to be appreciated—so viewed, a mature male is really a handsome bird. I am convinced, from the preparation they made, that they would have bred with me this year, but owing to their being so demonstrative at pairing time (though they did not fight,) I gave them their liberty, as I was more anxious to breed the foreigners.

Hedge Accentors. I kept one pair for nine months, when

they wasted away during the moult—they seldom showed themselves, hiding away when anyone was about. I consider them unsuited to aviary life, and as uninteresting under such conditions as it is possible for birds to be, and have certainly no desire to possess others.

Greenfinches have not bred with me—though quite a number of eggs were laid—but with so much company I do not think open nest builders likely to succeed, they pull one another's nests to pieces so, almost as soon as built. I have found them quite inoffensive and pleasing occupants of my aviary.

Chaffinches are charming, both as regards song, hardiness, and vivacity. I have six or seven; their colours, if not brilliant, are so beautifully blended one with the other as to make the effect altogether pleasing; and with their sprightliness under all conditions, I should not care to be without them—they are singing grandly now.

Bullfinches have not bred with me—my cock died suddenly without any apparent cause when they were preparing to [illegible], and when I procured another it was too late in the season; they have now just commenced building, and I am hoping for success this time—these, with their bright colours and affection one for the other, if not gifted with a natural song, are charming inmates of my aviary; they enjoy a branch of willow, poplar, or fruit tree for green food.

Java Sparrows, procured last July, did not breed, but were full of life and activity, keeping themselves in beautiful trim under all conditions; they built this year and then went into moult, but are now building again; these are difficult to sex, but thanks to the kind courteous information of Dr. A. G. Butler, it is now comparatively easy. He showed me by living specimens the details given in his article in the Magazine awhile ago.

Ribbon Finches, obtained in July, nested in August, and hatched out three young early in September, when the cock died, being apparently quite healthy, and in the midst of the [illegible]ve-named company. The hen successfully brought them up, [illegible]ng them while in the nest exclusively on dried ants' eggs; [illegible] they flew (and I watched closely) I never observed her give them anything but millet, and fine strong young ones they were, one cock and two hens, and I have them now, in the very pink of condition. These birds have not been quarrelsome at all, in fact quite inoffensive.

Black-faced Weavers, procured when out of colour, proved two cocks, so they have been simply ornamental. They are interesting for the nests they build and the total dissimilarity of summer and winter plumage. This change seems to be brought about by the bursting of colour glands, which much resembles pin feathers. They also at the same time moult the primaries. They have been successfully wintered outdoors. They bathed in frosty weather, not simply a splashing, but actually going into the water and getting so soaked that they could scarcely fly up to the perches, and they were none the worse, in fact at the present time they are among the healthiest inmates of my aviary—one just in colour and the other nearly so . . . and yet one authority on foreign birds declared it would be cruel to make the attempt and impossible of success—so much for theories and theorists.

Bramble Finches, Redpolls and Buntings. I have only cocks—these give variety to my collection, and are quite harmless—the Bramble Finch is a beauty, he has moulted twice in the aviary, and at the present is in splendid condition and feather. One fact concerning my Yellow Bunting may be of interest. I found him boldly attacking a mouse, flying at it, bouncing upon it with beak and feet, nor did he desist till he had driven his enemy through the wires.

All the above have been kept in the space aforenamed, and I have had only six deaths from the time I began getting them together, up to the present (twenty months) . . this speaks for itself as to the treatment given—and I am certain they are happy from the way they sing: birds do not sing when out of sorts. They are sometimes too noisy when you are in close proximity to the aviary—heard from the house about 100 feet away, it is delightful practically all day long, but they are well looked after and fed as near to nature as possible. I have just added a pair of Green Singing Finches to my collection—these are beautiful birds and very sweet singers—I have them in a small portable aviary, also outside. I shall add to my feathered friends some of the rarer kinds, as I am able to increase my accommodation . . . My experience up to present has only given me appetite for more. There is one nuisance about outdoor aviaries in London, and that is the cats—you can't be out all day and there they sit, watching, hoping and longing. How I should like to see them taxed and muzzled—then I am certain we should, even in London, have many of our feathered songsters freely nesting in our gardens.

"STURNUS TRISTIS" *v.* LOCUSTS.

By H. C. Martin.

That handsome Starling, variously known to English dealers as the Brown Mynah, Mud Mynah and Common Mynah, became known to me under somewhat unusual circumstances; and although my acquaintance with the species is only quite casual, and I cannot claim to have properly studied it, I think the reasons which led me to keep this bird for a time will be of some interest to the members of the Avicultural Society.

The autumn of 1896 and the first months of the present year in the Argentine and Uruguay were remarkable for the overwhelming invasion of locusts which overspread these countries; and although this destructive and disgusting plague, of which we here in England can scarcely form an idea, appears more or less regularly every year in the River Plate, this time it has been nothing less than a calamity to very many engaged in the pastoral and agricultural industries, for so vast and widespread a visitation has never occurred before as far back as can be remembered. Crops devoured, gardens and orchards devastated, pastures ruined for the time being, and cattle starving, even railway trains delayed, was everywhere the tale, and the papers were full of pars. about the dreaded "langostas," reporting the movements of the "mangas" or swarms on flight, where they were going, whence they came, what should be done against them, etc., almost as though a real army were invading the land, and suggesting endless ways of keeping the enemy in check.

A large firm owning very extensive "estancias" or stock farms, comprising many leagues of "camp" in Uruguay, requested me to obtain, as an experiment, a number of a certain bird, known to the French as "le martin triste" and which, according to the papers, had been introduced with much success into Mauritius, Algeria and other French colonies to combat the locust plague. I at first thought that the Rosy Pastor was the bird, but wishing to make quite sure which was the species in question, I wrote to the Director of the "Jardin d'Acclimatation" at Paris, who kindly replied:

"L'oiseau connu sous le nom de Martin-triste, '*Acridotheres tristis*,' est bien celui qui a été introduit en Algerie et à Madagascar pour la destruction des sauterelles;" adding that:

"C'est à Maurice que les résultats les meilleurs ont été obtenus."

Having then satisfied myself as to the bird's identity and appearance I accordingly commenced a search for this "sad locust devourer," and at length, after a good deal of trouble, for he does not appear to be a stock article with the dealers, found just two hanging up in the rain outside a filthy east-end bird-shop, and looking very sad indeed, poor things, in a cramped and dirty cage, with hardly a drop of water and a diet of dirty boiled potato and bread. The purchase was soon negotiated and I was able to study my new friends. Fine powerful-looking birds they were, in spite of their bad condition, a trifle superior in size to a black-bird, and of a cinnamon brown ground colour deepening to glossy black on the head, tail, and flight feathers, and fading to dirty white on the belly, the undercoverts of both wings and tail being also white. The patch of white on the wing, formed by the flights having each an inch or so of this colour at the base and noticeable only when the wing is open, and the sharp, strong, orange coloured bill and thick yellow legs, together with the little patch of bare yellow skin behind the eye, are striking features in the bird's appearance, and when one sees their business like walk and sharp searching glance, their relationship to our English bird becomes very apparent. There was a pair in fine condition, but not shown to advantage, at the last Crystal Palace Bird Show.

Given a roomy cage and suitable food, the birds soon picked up and were not slow to bathe and get their plumage into better trim, and then it was not easy to understand why Linnæus called them "*tristis*" for more comical, lively fellows one could hardly find. It was soon evident that they were a pair, for the male would jump up beside his companion, puff out his feathers, and stand up and bow in a most amusing fashion, uttering meanwhile a curious guttural cry, mingled with a clear whistle, and finishing up with a kind of purr to which the other would respond with a contented chuckle. They were an interesting couple and very tame indeed, but their stay with me lasted only a few days, when with one more of their kind, all that could be had at the time, they were taken out to Montevideo by a gentleman travelling to the Plate, and duly liberated. I found them very nice birds, but, owing to their tremendous appetites, rather a nuisance to feed and clean when one has not suitable indoor accommodation. With plenty of room I should think a pair would make very interesting pets, as they appear docile and hardy, and, from what I can gather, easily taught to whistle and even speak.

As for feeding I found that little came amiss to them; potato,

bread, egg, fruit, worms and insects of any kind were all eaten, more or less eagerly, but the greatest treat seemed to be meat, raw or cooked, and particularly poultry. A chicken-bone hung up in the cage was a source of constant enjoyment and was not abandoned until it had been absolutely picked clean. This readiness for a flesh diet may have been consequent upon the previous poor living the birds had had to put up with, as I see in last month's Magazine that a correspondent could not get his "Mynah" (what species?) to eat meat.

The birds seemed very fond of bathing and drank a great deal of water.

Eventually, I was able to obtain a fair number of the birds which were duly shipped, but only a few survived. They have since been observed from time to time and appear to be prospering, but the locust plague having disappeared for the time being, partly through favourable weather and the fact that locusts are "out of season" so to speak, partly through the attacks of a parasitic worm, (no doubt the larva of an ichneumon fly) the further introduction of "*Sturnus tristis*" has been taken up, particularly as it is a very difficult matter to get the birds intelligently looked after while at sea, which is perhaps the greatest bar to their importation, and no doubt why one has to pay from 10/- to £1 for a bird which can be bought in Calcutta for as little as 4d.

It remains to be seen whether the few individuals successfully received will increase their kind, as newly introduced species sometimes do with rapidity, and become eventually a boon to the country, but on the other hand it is a question whether we can interfere with the dispensations of Providence in these matters without calling down upon us a worse trouble (as witness the experiments with the mongoose, sparrow, rabbit, etc.) and half-a-dozen specimens of "*Sturnus tristis*" multiplied by "*x*" might eventually tire of locusts as a diet and find more congenial sustenance in the fruit gardens, as the Rosy Pastor is said to have done in Bourbon, where it was finally necessary to shoot him without mercy.

The locust plague itself, it has been said, is largely due to the land having been turned into pastures or cultivated, the irrigation never having attained such dimensions in the earlier days of the country, and it is interesting here to remark that just now River Plate "estancieros" have to contend with another manifestation of nature's resentment against the disturbance of her balance of power in the shape of a plague of "ticks,"

which are so numerous that numbers of fine cattle succumb to their exhausting attacks, while even horses are covered with them—a rare occurrence. Would not a Starling be of some use here also?

It seems strange that there should be no native bird w[hich] is an efficient natural enemy of the above two terrible insects.

For the locusts I suggested trying the common Starlin[g] but he was considered too small to tackle them, though, in my own opinion, the chief good would be done by the destruction of the ova while in the soil, and of the non-flying larval locusts or "saltonas," which, by the way, are the most dreaded for their destructive powers, and a Starling of some sort is certainly the bird needed for this. But perhaps it is as well that our speckled friend has not found his way out there, for he should make a sturdy colonist and would very likely oust a good many native species.

In conclusion, I would remark that I was struck t[o] find what a curious likeness there is between the various ki[nds] of Indian Starlings. In the course of my search for "*tri*[stis]" I came across four distinct species which, to a casual ob[server] seemed almost identical, and no doubt all would have been more or less suitable for the purpose. One, I think, was the Crested Mynah; another, the small Hill Mynah, and a third was precisely like "*tristis*," but entirely dull black and lacking the bare skin behind the eye; the most noticeable point was that all had the white patch on the wing and the white bar across the end of the tail.

A FEW NOTES ON SOME NATURAL FOODS.

By C. S. Simpson.

The various dried seeds, prepared foods, and other things which are sold for the feeding of our tame birds, are so cheap and, in some respects, so good that we are in some danger of losing sight of the fact that many foods which are to be had for the mere trouble of collecting, are more nearly like the natur[al] foods which birds obtain in their wild state, and are, in that respect, better than any artificial food can possibly be. The[re] are not very many of us who are altogether beyond the reach of fields, or at any rate of a garden, and I am convinced that almost everyone of us might with benefit make more use of these natural foods than we do. I have not anything very novel

to bring forward on this subject, but wish rather to remind our aviculturists of the value of these foods.

1. *Fresh Grass Seed.* Most of us, I suppose, from time to time, give our small finches a little of the common grass when [illegible] seed. This is probably the best of all foods for Waxbills [illegible] Grass-Finches. They prefer it to any other seed, except [illegible]rhaps spray millet, and so long as it can be obtained, I would [illegible]dvocate its use, not only occasionally, but as their principal food. Cordon-bleus and other small birds which are delicate when newly imported thrive wonderfully on this and (if they can be obtained) fresh ants' eggs. My Gouldian Finches throve as long as they had a good supply of this freshly gathered seed, and I attribute my little success in keeping them through the winter, as much to the substitution of dried for fresh seed, as to the influence of cold. Of course, in a town it is not always easy to procure even so simple a matter as grass, but probably [illegible]ost aviculturists could get a boy to collect it at the cost of the [illegible]nary and millet seed saved.

2. *Berries.* The common red berries known as haws are eagerly eaten by many parrots: nothing gives them greater pleasure than to pull to pieces a bough of hawthorn, picking off and eating the red berries. The Waxwing is very fond of them, and bolts them whole. Elderberries are a favourite food of Blackcaps. These are the only berries I have used much. Possibly others would be equally useful.

3. *Chickweed*, when ripe and full of seed, is liked by finches, though they prefer the grass-seed. I need only mention groundsel, dandelion, and watercress.

4. *Earwigs.* These unattractive insects abound, and are an unmitigated nuisance in most town gardens. Insectivorous birds eat them greedily, and they seem to be perfectly wholesome. Last summer, in a small garden, with very little trouble I collected so many earwigs that I was able to save the cost of several thousand mealworms, and this during the time of the year when mealworms were scarce. The simplest plan of taking [illegible]arwigs is to place pieces of hollow cane among dahlias or rose [illegible]rees: earwigs and other insects collect in these snug retreats [illegible]nd may be blown out into a bottle.

5. *Cockroaches.* I need hardly mention these as most aviculturists know their value. Birds will readily help themselves out of a "Demon" trap. For birds caged separately the insects may be picked out with a small pair of forceps.

6. *Clothes' Moths.* I recollect some time ago reading some notes by an ardent aviculturist who advised the cultivation of the larvæ of the common clothes' moth, and their use as a food for ornamental finches. I have never ventured on the experiment, but the plan will doubtless be found an excell[ent] one by those who do not object to an abundant supply of cl[oth] moths in their dwellings. I believe the birds are very fond [of] them.

7. *Fresh Ants' Eggs.* I have elsewhere, on more than one occasion, described a method of collecting these, and therefore need only insist here on their great value for Waxbills, Grassfinches, and the more delicate insectivorous birds. The difficulty of collecting them, however, places them beyond the reach of most aviculturists.

8. Aphides, spiders, caterpillars, and flies are useful, but cannot generally be collected so easily as earwigs and cockroaches.

Perhaps I should apologise for taking up space i[n] the Magazine with these rather elementary notes, but in aviculture, as in other matters, there is some danger of falling into a routine, and this, I think, generally takes the form of depending too much on the shop foods and neglecting the more natural foods.

THE LINNET.

In a tower above the gateway of the old Cathedral close
Is a little leaded window of a chamber of repose,
And, outside it, hangs in sunshine and the gently passing air,
In its wooden cage, a linnet, with a song without compare:
Sweet is all its simple singing, and as sweet as if 'twere free,
And you know not what the value of its singing is to me,

In the Minster, in the lofty choir where the light but filters dim,
I hear the mighty organ and the deep and solemn hymn;
I hear the fresh young voices, as in rapture, clearly rise
With the basses and the tenors in the splendid harmonies;
And I love the choirèd singing, but my heart will ever be
With the little simple linnet that is singing there for me!

For he wakes in me sweet memories of the happy times of old,
And the greenery of the summer trees, and the fields of harvest gold,
And the peace of all the grazing herds, and the sheep-bell's soothing charm,
And the dear old moss-roofed cottage by the orchard at the Farm;
So you know now why the little linnet, singing there for me,
Dearer than the Minster's choiring to my heart will ever be!

T. G. L. (Brighton).

CORRESPONDENCE.

A CHEAP FOOD FOR INSECTIVOROUS BIRDS.

SIR,—I shall be obliged if you could let me know if the dried insects entioned by Dr. Butler, on page 79 of the Magazine, are to be obtained in gland and where ?

W. OAKEY.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Oakey.

I have not heard of any dealer having imported the Indian dried insects mentioned by me on page 79 of the Magazine; but Mr. Frank Finn, of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, would be able to tell you definitely whether any proposal has been made to arrange for the importation of these insects. Now that ants' cocoons are so difficult to obtain at a reasonable rate, they would undoubtedly be a great boon to us all.

A. G. BUTLER.

WHAT NAME ?

SIR,—Perhaps some of our numerous members might be able to entify, from the following somewhat imperfect description, a bird that has been in my possession some months, and which I have been unable, so far, to name.

Colour, bright glossy black showing bluish reflection in the sun; around eyes, small ill-defined ring of white; both upper and lower mandible black; upper mandible covering lower, when beak is closed, on one side; lower mandible covering upper on reverse side, so that action of beak becomes exactly like a pair of scissors; culmen, high and flat; iris, light brown; legs, black; total length, 13in.; tail, 7in.; tarsus, 5in.

He came from a well-known London dealer, who told me that he had never seen a similar one before. Whether the beak, which is extraordinary, is natural, or is a deformity, I am unable to determine.

Thanking you in anticipation.

RUSSELL HUMPHRYS.

THE TUI.

SIR,—Mr. Whytehead writes that he kept some of these most interesting birds for some months in New Zealand, feeding them entirely on boiled potatoes mashed up finely with plenty of sugar.

This is a very interesting and for amateurs most valuable confirmation of what I had heard from dealers and could scarcely credit.

Mr. Whytehead found his birds thriving on this diet in captivity. at there was no mistake about this is proved by the fact that he kept for some months and that they then had energy enough left to escape, hough quite tame, declined to return, which I should have expected eak and sickly bird to do.

I wish Mr. Whytehead had been good enough to say whether the boiled potatoes were the dry mealy kind or the watery Dutch sort, whether he used powdered lump sugar or moist sugar and in what proximate proportion.

It does seem a puzzle to guess what a bird may feed on in the wild state, who will only thrive on boiled potatoes in captivity.

If I had Tuis again, I should try one on a diet of mealy potatoes mashed with plenty of moist sugar, and another on mashed mealy potatoes mixed with condensed milk.

What may be sufficient nourishment in New Zealand may [illegible] trifle deficient in our English climate.

It is hoped that this pretty and interesting bird may be seen in future more often in the hands of amateurs, and reward their care by endurance and robust health.

Communications, such as Mr. Whytehead's, of practical experience in keeping birds which are reputed delicate, will earn the thanks of all lovers of foreign cage birds.

AUG. F. WEINER.

PARROT FINCHES.

SIR,—These beautiful birds have been mentioned in several of the recent numbers of the Magazine, and as I was unable to procure a pair until last year, I have been much interested in the correspondence concerning them. I have, at present, four specimens—two an *undoubted* pair (not nesting)—the other two, much younger, are *supposed* to be a pair, and think they are.

I fully concur with all that has been said regarding the difficulty in distinguishing the sexes. In my undoubted pair, they are as near alike in plumage "as two peas in a pod;" if there is any difference, the hen is the brighter and better looking bird of the two. In the other pair, not yet in adult feather, the one supposed to be the cock has more red on its head and throat than the presumed hen, but as neither are yet adult, and the supposed cock may be the older of the two the extra amount of red marking it has cannot be taken as an infallible distinction of its sex. But a marked difference—a difference I have not seen mentioned in any notes regarding the sexes—exists in *both* my pairs, *i.e.*, the legs and feet of both the *hens* (the undoubted and the supposed) are much *lighter in colour* than those of the cocks. I noticed this in the first (adult) pair I received, and as it occurs again in the second pair, I am inclined to think it may be a distinctive mark, and should like to know if the same peculiarity has been observed by anybody else possessing *undoubted* pairs. I do not think size can always be depended upon as a distinction of sex, for a friend of mine here has also a pair—they had eggs in January or early in February, this year—and the cock bird is the *smaller* of the two; anyway, I have heard a dozen times his pretty little note, as my male bird sings, while the other, beyond the usual chirp, remains mute, precisely as my hen does—the larger bird is, therefore, in all probability, the one that laid the eggs—the hen.

A few notes as to how my adult pair have conducted themselves since their arrival—early in October last—may interest our readers. Not having had any experience with the species prior to then, and doubting as to their being able to stand the winter in an outdoor aviary, I lodged them in a small box-cage, fitted up with a box and rush nest sheltered by a small branch, and in this cage they passed the winter, in the dining-room. A little nesting material was also put in the cage. Towards the end of

November they commenced building in the rush nest and laid two eggs; they incubated them very little, and they were eventually thrown out on the bottom of the cage and broken. A second nest followed in January and met with the same fate. They are shy and restless birds in a cage, very quick in their movements and easily disturbed, darting about when approached, and I attribute the non-success in these two instances to the dining-room not being private and quiet enough for them. The hen showed signs of [illegible]ing to nest again last month, and as the weather was not very cold, I [illegible]ned them into my outdoor aviary of mixed birds. They soon began [illegible]sting operations and are now sitting; I have seen three eggs in the nest (in a cocoa-nut husk) and fancy another has been laid since. The young should hatch in a few days—if I am fortunate enough to get any—and I shall take a peep as soon as I can without being seen by the parents.

I take the Parrot Finch to be one of the best of rare finches to nest in captivity; a bird anxious to live, and does his best to do so—quite a relief after the apathetic and discouraging Gould. He is a frugal liver, feeding on canary seed, white and spray millet, and greenfood—chickweed and above all, *flowering* grass, given in abundance, roots as well, as soon as it can be gathered by the road-side. I generally throw twenty or thirty fresh roots to my aviary daily, and take away those of the previous day; all the [illegible]ds, Parrakeets included, are very soon down among them.

The hen Parrot Finch, I have noticed, builds the nest, sitting in the rush basket or husk, taking in the material as fast as her mate brings it to her, and shapes a snug domed nest.

As regards ants' eggs, mealworms and such food, I have never seen my Parrot Finches touch them, although the former are in the aviary all day; but they eat a little hemp, and I don't think a few grains a day per bird hurt them.

A. Savage. (Rouen).

Sir,—I can now supplement my notes on Parrot Finches. The nest to which I above referred has produced two young: they left the nest last Saturday, June 12th, and are now beginning to feed themselves. They are mostly green in colour, dingy on the breast and vent, very little red at the base of the tail, and a tinge of rather indistinct yellow on the throat. The legs and beak are yellow or amber, and the beak has a dark streak towards the point. They appear strong and lively, and seem to be doing their best to live, continually crying for food, following their parents and trying to feed themselves. I still hold this finch, more than ever, as one of the best of rare or expensive birds to keep in the aviary, and can thoroughly recommend him. Mine have nested in an aviary with some thirty mixed birds, from Parrakeets down to Waxbills, without any fuss or trouble. I said in my previous notes that they did not eat ants' eggs or mealworms; they did not until the young were hatched, but [illegible] they partook of them freely,* also milk-sop; it is as well, I think, [illegible]ore, to supply all, especially when they have young.

[illegible] I have at present three young Many-coloured Parrakeets in the nest, [illegible]bout a fortnight old, and all doing well, so far.

A. Savage. (Rouen).

---

* By "freely," I allude to the ants' eggs. They have about half-a-dozen mealworms a-day.

BRAZILIAN HANGNESTS AND BLACKCAPS.

SIR,—I should be very much obliged if you would kindly let me know what is the best food for an Orange Troupial, also a Blackcap. I am now giving them both: egg mixed with powdered biscuit, ants' eggs, mealworms, currants, banana, and oranges. But I should be glad to know of a food that would nourish and yet not *fatten*, as most foods do, I think.

Mr. Abrahams recommends his food, but as the staple ingredient appears to be pea-meal it does not recommend itself to me.*

If you will give me some advice I shall be very grateful. Also how many mealworms per diem would you give?

MARY APPLEFORD.

The following replies were sent to Mrs. Appleford :—

Doubtless Brazilian Hangnest. It is an insectivorous bird, and specially keen after caterpillars, and also takes fruit. Mine used to fly loose in aviary and help themselves to anything they liked; nothing was provided specially for them. Give insectivorous food, insects if obtainable, or a few mealworms, milk sop, and occasionally a little fruit; also fig, dates, raisins, etc., now and then. It is a very cute bird; and will help itself to the best it can get, and will not starve itself to please anybody.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

The food for Blackcaps is hard-boiled egg and ants' eggs in equal parts, and a little scraped raw beef, also mealworms and any insects that can be got. They do best in a fair-sized cage, and require water for bathing, care being taken that they do not take cold after it.

J. LEWIS BONHOTE.

THE SCARLET IBIS.

SIR,—I should be glad of any hints on the management of the Scarlet Ibis. I have just bought one, and he seems to do well on Spratts' food, worms, green food, &c.

Will these birds stand our winter in an unheated aviary? Are they good tempered, and do they make any loud noise?

Mine is quite young, and is buffy pink on the body with some brown feathers on the head, neck, and breast. How long will he be before he gets his scarlet feathers? How can you tell the sexes? He seems a nice docile bird but a voracious feeder and inclined to be messy.

A. A. THOM.

---

* I believe there is not a particle of pea-meal in Abrahams' Food. I don't know what the basis is, but have always believed it to be coarsely ground Indian corn. Nevertheless, pea-meal is very wholesome.—A. G. B.

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

MEMBERS' SALE AND EXCHANGE COLUMN.

The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 6 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable.*

Indian Ring-necked Parrakeet, a clever and distinct talker, £4 or exchange breeding pair foreign birds.
Dr. SAVEGE, 24, Railway Street, Beverley.

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A few hand-reared 1897 Magpies, very tame, strong, healthy specimens, 3/6 each. G. L. GRACE, 24, Wood Street, Wakefield.

[illegible]air Striated Finches, 3/6; pair Parson Finches, 7/-, aviary-moulted; pair Diamond Sparrows, 8/-, cage-moulted; pair Australian Wonga-Wonga Pigeons, 35/-, very fine plumage, acclimatized; pair Bronze-winged Pigeons, 45/-.
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Cock Virginian Nightingale, full plumage and song, 15/-; pair Japanese Robins, 7/6; fine Zebra Finch hen, 3/6; 20 adult cock Budgerigars, 2/6 each or 40/- the lot, this year's fine young for sale at 7/6 per pair; pair Chocolate and White Bengalese, 5/-; Red-billed Weaver, full colour, with beautiful salmon head and breast, 3/-; rare Masked Weaver, 6/6; cock Mealy Rosella, lovely bird, 25/-; Ring-necked Parrakeet, full plumage, 7/6.
C. P. ARTHUR, Market Place, Melksham.

Aviary-bred hen Australian Crested Dove, 10/-.
Miss M. SHARP, Spring Gardens, Ringwood.

Very fine pair Peach-faced Love-birds, 40/-.
D. SETH-SMITH, Wilford House, Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone.

WANTS.

(These are charged for at the same rate as birds for sale).

Male Golden-shouldered *(Psephotus chrysopterygius)*, male Paradise, and female Tui Parrakeets.
R. PHILLIPPS, 26, Cromwell Grove, West Kensington Park, W.

[illegible]ediately: Hen White Bengalese.
Miss THOYTS, Sulhampstead, Berks.

[illegible]s: *Ruficauda*, Parrot-finch, Pintailed Nonpareil.
W. H. ST. QUINTIN, Scampston Hall, York.

Hen Vinaceous Dove and Diamond Sparrow; cocks of both for exchange or sale. Miss M. SHARP, Spring Gardens, Ringwood.

Hen Blue-winged Love-bird.
GUSTAVE L. GRACE, 24, Wood Street, Wakefield.

Hen Turquoisine and hen Avadavat.
WILLIAM THOMPSON, Plevna Terrace, Bingley.

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PAIRS: Long-tailed grassfinches, show condition, 55/-; orange-cheeked waxbills, 2/-; common waxbills, 2/3; bronze mannikins, 2/3; ribbon finches, St. Helenas, 2/6; green singing-finches, 3/-; silver-bills, 3/-; cordon-bleus, 4/-; orange-bishops, 4/6; green avadavats, red-beaked weavers, paradise whydahs, combassous, Napoleon-bishops, 5/-; lavender finches, grey singing-finches, fire-finches, 6/-; pin-tailed whydahs, 10/6; Madagascar avadavats, in colour, 6/6; Madagascar bearded seed-eaters, 10/6; striated-finches, Bengalese, 4/6; black-headed nuns, in colour, 1/6; spicebirds, in colour, 2/6; Java sparrows, 2/6, white 8/6; zebra-finches, 7/6; parson-finches, 10/6; cherry-finches, 10/6; chestnut-breasted reed-finches, 12/-; extremely rare, beautifully singing citril-finches, 15/-.

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Vide Avicultural Magazine, November 1897, page 17. . . . "They, and none others, ought to be used in every bird room. It is true that they are rather more expensive than the ordinary fountain, but then they are much more durable, so that they cost no more in the end. They are so constructed that the water cannot very well be fouled by the birds; they can be easily and quickly filled; and *the inside can be thoroughly cleaned.*"

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(Continued from page 2 of cover).

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Pair Ornamented Lorikeets. Both imported over two years. Absolutely perfect in every respect, and an undoubted pair, £4 4/-. Good pair Blue Robins, 15/-

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Hen Malabar Parrakeet in fine condition, 10/6; would exchange for cock and pay difference.

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Splendid pair of Goldfinches, two years in unheated aviary; nested last year; pair of Saffron Finches in colour; three young Saffrons bred last year in same aviary. Miss HUSBAND, Clifton View, York.

Splendid cock Nonpareil, fit for Show, 7/6; Indigo Bird, full colour, 5/6; Spice Bird, 1/6; fawn and white cock Bengalese, 2/6; Hen Zebra Finches, 3/6 each; pair Ribbon Finches, cage moulted, 3/6; cock Virginian Nightingale in song, but pale in colour, 9/6; this year's young Budgerigars, 2/6 each; fine adult breeding pairs, 8/6 per pair; Cape Canary, 5/-. C. P. ARTHUR, Melksham.

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...en Diamond Dove; Hen Tambourine Dove; cock Green-wing Dove (*Chalcophaps indica*). O. E. CRESSWELL, Morney Cross, nr. Hereford.

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Acclimatised cock Crimson-finch (*Neochmia phaeton*), exchange hen ditto or pair Masked Fire-finches (*Lagonosticta larvata*).

D. SETH-SMITH, 22, Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone.

(Continued on page 4 of cover).

THE FOREIGN BIRD EXHIBITORS' LEAGUE.

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Hon. Sec. & Treasurer:
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Scrutineer:
Mr. D. Seth-Smith, 22, Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone.

The Subscription to Members of the Avicultural Society is 2/6, to others 5/- per annum.

Notices to Members:

CANDIDATE FOR ELECTION.

Mr. C. B. D'Eyncourt Chamberlain, Twynham, Christchurch Road, Bournemouth
Proposed by Mr. Fillmer.

(Members of the Avicultural Society can join without formal election).

The rules have now been settled by the Council and will shortly be published.

Applications from Show Committees for the League's Medals, to be awarded to members only, should be made to the Council through the Secretary.

Mr. R. Humphrys proposes to offer special prizes at some of the leading shows for the encouragement of the smaller exhibitors, and to be open only to members of the League.

(The above is inserted as an advertisement and paid for as such).

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THE

Avicultural Magazine.

BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. III.—No. 34. *All rights reserved.* AUGUST, 1897.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to Members monthly.

Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them. Dead birds cannot be received for identification or *post mortem* examination, on account of the risk of infection.

Bound Volumes of Vol. I. of the *Avicultural Magazine* can be obtained from the Secretary, price 21/-; there are only a very few copies remaining. Bound copies of Vol. II. are now ready, price 6/- to members, 7/6 to non-members. Most of the monthly parts of Vols. I. and II. can still be obtained from the Secretary, unbound, price 6d. each; but No. 2 (December, 1894) and No. 4 (February, 1895), are out of print.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

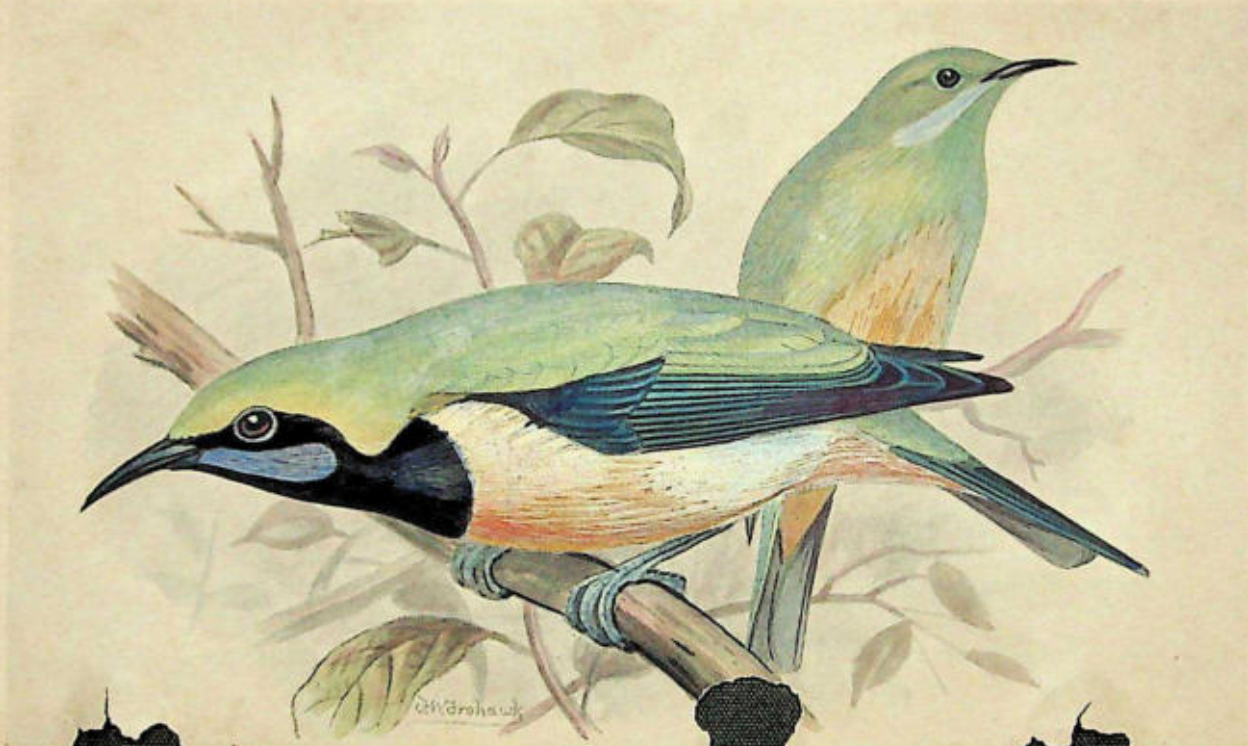
Dr. J. D. WILLIAMS, 93, Newport Road, Cardiff.

Mr. C. D. ROTCH, 3, Beach Lawn, Waterloo, nr. Liverpool.

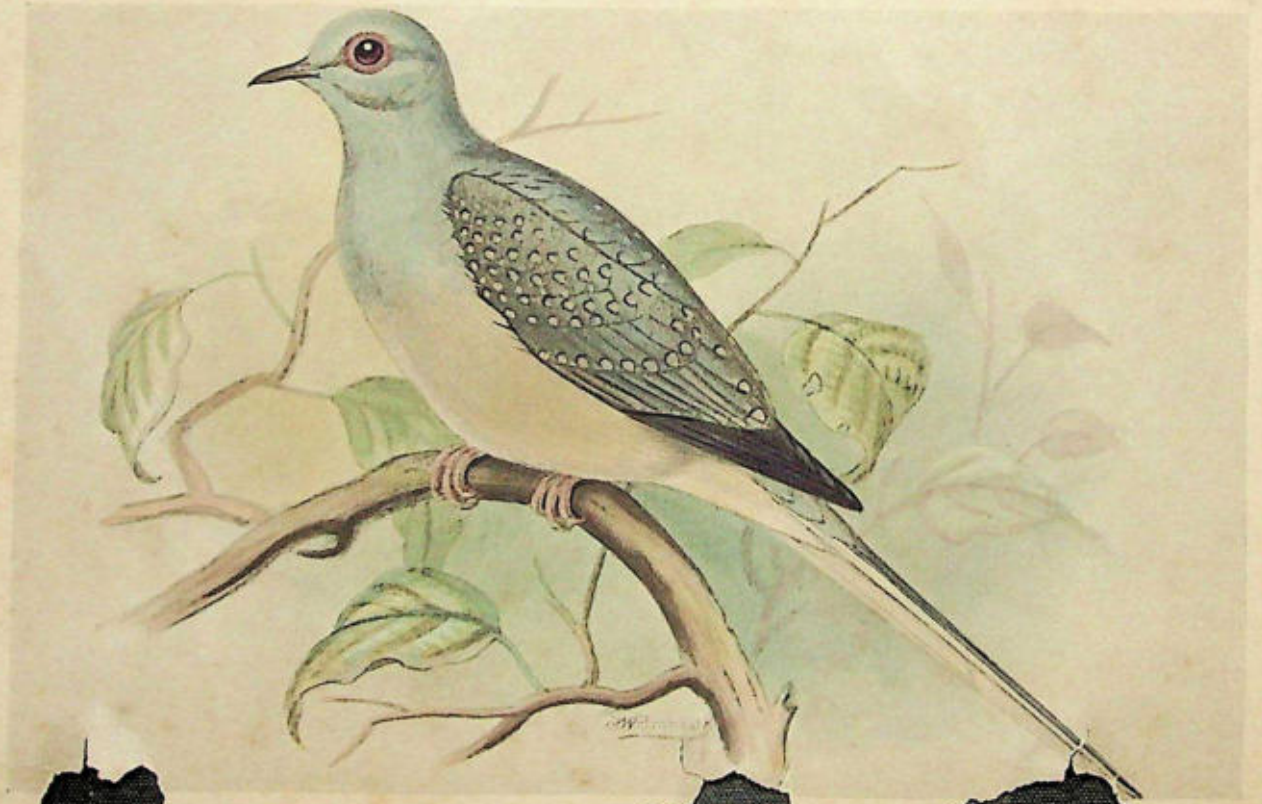
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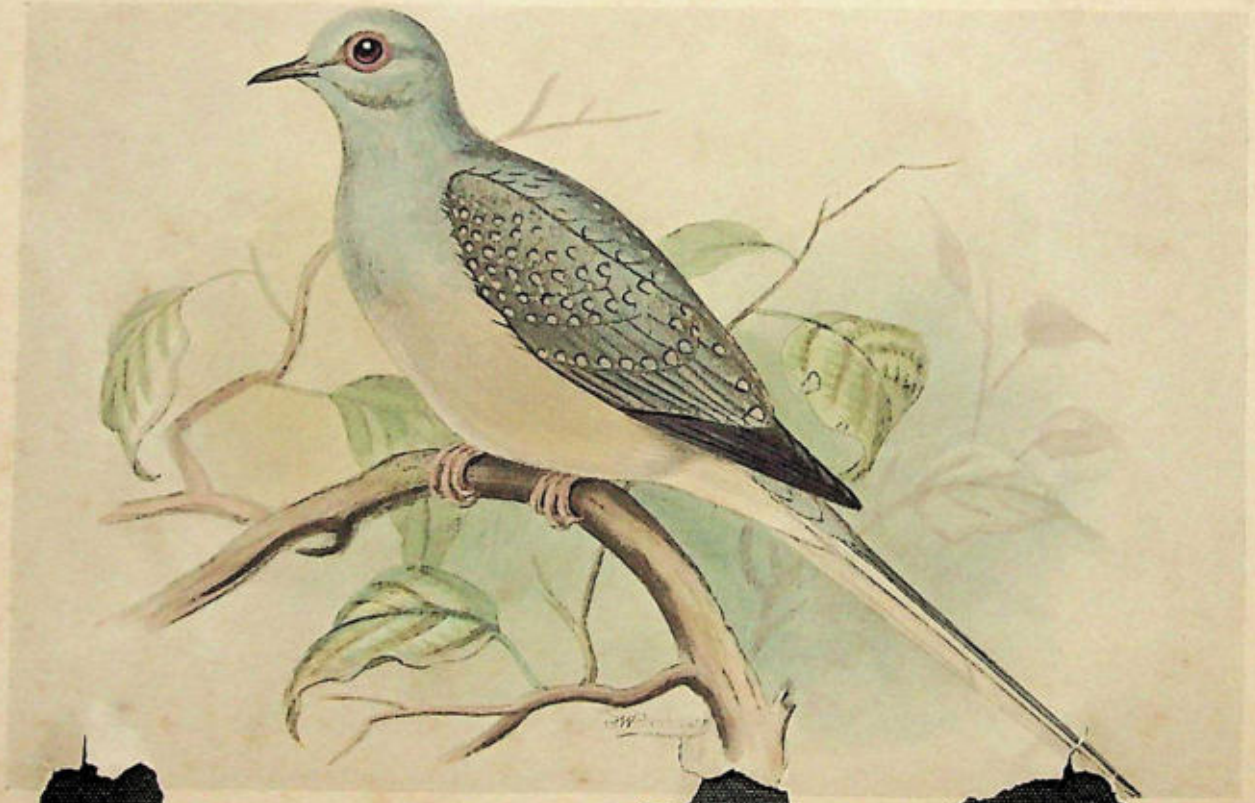
Miss E. FRANKLYN, Speenhill Lodge, Newbury.

(Continued on page 3 of cover).



CHLOROPSIS





DIAMON

THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. III.—No. 34. *All rights reserved.* AUGUST, 1897.

THE BLUE-WINGED GREEN HONEYSUCKER.

By Russell Humphrys.

The Blue-winged Green Honeysucker or Bulbul (*Chloropsis hardwickii*),* is an inhabitant of the S.E. Himalayas, from Nepal to Bootan, spreading south to the hill ranges of Assam, Sylhet and Crakan. As will be seen from the illustration this bird is of most gorgeous plumage, the prevailing colour being a bright, metallic green, the forehead and crown is yellowish green, the throat deep purple with a stripe of bright blue from the beak to the side of the neck, the breast and abdomen are of a rich orange hue, the tail and flights of the wings being deep blue. The legs and feet are slate colour, the beak stout and curved. Total length about seven inches. Contrary to many brightly plumaged species, these birds are gifted with vocal abilities of a very high order. As inmates of a bird-room they are perfection, although a separate cage is a *sine quâ non* owing to their somewhat bellicose disposition.

The male represented in the illustration has been in my possession some twelve months, and whether I was unusually lucky in obtaining an abnormally healthy bird, or whether it is a characteristic of the species, I am unable to say, but of all the birds that have at one time or another occupied my aviaries, none have given less trouble than the Honeysucker. By no means susceptible to cold, easy to cater for, and of a confiding though timid disposition, this bird is, *par excellence*, an interesting study for aviculturists.

These birds should be kept in roomy cages, provided with several perches of different sizes, and a large tin for bathing should always be available. Am I correct in stating that some little time ago Mr. Fulljames, in one of his interesting and highly instructive articles in a contemporary, said that his example of this species never bathed? Mine, on the contrary, has never

* Also called *Phyllornis hardwickii*.—Ed.

missed his bath from the day he was bought, and all through the recent winter, in spite of the room being occasionally at 40° or thereabouts, has thoroughly drenched himself daily. I cannot help thinking that it is owing to this propensity that he keeps himself in such excellent trim. These birds moult towards the end of June, and are in full feather by the end of September. Being soft feathered, great care should be exercised in moving them about, as the first time that my bird was handled, a handful of feathers was left when he was released. He occupies one of the lightest corners of the bird-room, as, in common with the majority of brilliant coloured species, he would no doubt rapidly become dingy and fade if kept in a sombre light.

His diet consists of potatoes, well boiled, passed through a sieve and mixed with yolk of egg and a few ants' eggs, with a fresh banana daily, (the latter item is essential as these birds are almost entirely frugivorous), twice or three times a week a few well scalded kitchen currants are added, of the latter they are especially fond. For some considerable time after the bird arrived a piece of orange used to form an important item of the daily fare, but latterly it has been omitted as experience has proved it to be unnecessary if not actually injurious. Meal-worms he will not touch, but is exceedingly dexterous in catching unwary blue-bottles and flies that stray near the bars of his cage.

This individual bird is perhaps the most accomplished mimic that has ever inhabited my bird-room. The flute-like notes of the Blackbird, the melodious song of the Thrush, the plantive carol of the Robin, or the guttural chirp of the House Sparrow are repeated with equal facility and accuracy. I well remember one morning in the early summer of last year, hearing, as I imagined, a Blackbird in a great state of alarm in the immediate vicinity of the bird-room; thoughts of stray cats flashed across my mind and hurrying, gun in hand, to the aviary (I hope members of the Avicultural Society who are proud possessors of priceless long-haired "kitties" will forgive me) eagerly sought the assumed, unwelcome intruder, but neither cat nor Blackbird was to be seen; a few seconds afterwards the mystery was explained; the frightened Blackbird was the Blue-winged Honeysucker who was apparently amusing himself by practising his extraordinary power of mimicry at my expense!

Since his return from the recent Palace Show the song of the Canary is occupying his undivided attention.

Very few of these beautiful birds come into the market,

and they are consequently a somewhat expensive luxury when procurable, but those who have been fortunate enough to secure a specimen of *Chloropsis hardwickii* will, I have no doubt, agree that as inmates of a bird-room they are all that could be desired.

THE DIAMOND DOVE.

(Geopelia cuneata).

By O. Ernest Cresswell.

The "Diamond Dove," as it is now almost exclusively called by importers, is a Dove of many names. I find it called also the "Speckled Ground Dove," and the "Graceful Ground Dove," and occasionally, and not inaptly, by those who have known it in its wild state, the "Red-eyed Dove." It is certainly one of the smallest and most elegant of the vast Columbine tribe. I can never quite make up my mind which is the most attractive, this or the tiny "Harlequin" Cape Dove (*Œna capensis*). To whichever the palm of beauty and elegance may be given, the Diamond Dove has the advantage of being by far the hardier bird. The first description of it which I can recollect to have read, and which filled me with the desire, for many years unsatisfied, to possess a pair, was that of Sturt, one of the earlier Australian explorers. He wrote, "All that we read or imagine of the softness and innocence of the Dove is realized in this beautiful and delicate little bird. It is very small, and has a general purple plumage approaching to lilac. It has a bright red skin round the eyes, the iris being also red, and its wings are speckled over with delicate white spots. This sweet bird is common on the Murray and Darling, and was met with in various parts of the interior, but I do not think it migrates to the North-West. Two remained with us at the Depôt, in lat. 39° 40', long. 140°, during a great part of the winter, and on one occasion roosted on my tent ropes near a fire. The note of this Dove is exceedingly plaintive, and is softer, but much resembles, the coo of the Turtle Dove." I may here say, in passing, that I have gained a good deal of bird-lore from the books of earlier travellers, especially from those who give notes of the night temperatures of hot countries, which are frequently far lower than is generally imagined. The modern traveller, unless a professed naturalist, is generally in by far too great a hurry to observe or to record such commonplace facts.

Gould says of this Dove, "Its natural food being the seeds of grasses and leguminous plants, it is observed more frequently

on the ground than among trees. I sometimes met with it in small flocks, but more often in pairs or singly. It runs over the ground with a short bobbing motion of the tail, and while feeding is so remarkably tame as almost to admit of its being taken up by the hand; and if forced to take wing, it merely flies to the nearest trees, and there remains motionless among the branches until it again descends to the ground. I not unfrequently observed it close to the open doors of the huts of the stock-keepers of the interior, who, from its being so continually before them, regard it with little interest. The nest is a frail but beautiful structure formed of the stalks of a few flowering grasses, crossed and interwoven after the manner of the other Pigeons. It utters a rather singular note which at times very much resembles the distant crowing of a cock. The eggs are white and two in number, eleven-sixteenths of an inch long by seven-sixteenths broad. The sexes, although bearing a general resemblance to each other, may be readily distinguished by the smaller size of the female, by the browner hue of her wing feathers, and by the spotting of their upper surface not being so numerous or so regular as in the male."

These descriptions are no doubt accurate ones of the habits of the Diamond Dove in its native wilds. I will supplement them with my own experience of the Dove in captivity. Its appearance is best shown by the illustration. The head and breast are French grey or lavender; the tint of the back and wings is very peculiar, as if an olivaceous wash were put over the under lilac colour and were then studded with little diamonds. The back and wings of the hen are of a decidedly darker hue than those of the cock, almost umber, and the diamond-like marks are fewer and fainter. The under-parts and under-side of the tail of both sexes are of a beautiful pearl-grey. Certainly the beauty of Doves is seen from below as well as from above, for the under-tints of their tails are almost universally soft and lovely. The little flesh-coloured feet of the Diamond Dove are also peculiarly pretty.

Diamond Doves have bred in captivity. I have not myself been fortunate enough to rear any, but rather from having too many Doves in my aviaries than from the difficulty of inducing them to breed. For the small Doves I find very shallow baskets, either securely fixed in bushes or on wooden brackets, are the best nesting-places; and for nesting-stuff I give the withered green of bulbs or of rock-plants. It is usually soft and pliant, and Nature provides it just when the Doves should nest. They

like to make their rough little nests themselves, often on strange and dangerous ledges, and I find it useless to give them the elaborate nests of other birds. If once they go to nest they almost invariably sit well, hatch out their eggs and duly feed their young for about twelve days; then they go to nest again, the young are neglected, become weak in the legs, and die just before they should feed themselves.

Of the hardihood of this Dove I have had some personal experience. It is curious how the naturalists of fifty years and even twenty-five years ago thought that every bird which comes from an ordinarily hot climate must necessarily require similar heat at all times of the year to thrive. Dixon wrote, about 1850, of this Diamond Dove, "One elegant little Dove found by the same explorers in the same heated deserts, can hardly be got through a British winter in a snug cage in a warm room." I kept a cock through three bitter winters in an unheated outdoor aviary; though I must confess that his hen died on a day of memorable cold. I regretted the experiment, though this little cock always looked the picture of health and happiness; now all my small Doves go out of doors in May, and in October migrate back to large cages in a fairly cool bird-room. Many little Doves, which for years have borne the cold well, show signs of feeling it in old age and should be treated accordingly.

I feed them all chiefly on canary seed with a little white millet, and hemp occasionally in winter. The flight of the Diamond Dove is most elegant and rapid, and I must warn aviculturists that they have a wonderful knack of darting out over one's head as one enters the aviary. They have, however, strong homing instincts, and I have hardly ever failed eventually to recover an escaped Dove.

Within the last few days I procured a fresh pair of Diamond Doves. They had been kept for some time in a cage, and when they arrived at midday, were stiff, and, when I put them into an aviary, could not fly up; in two hours they had regained the use of their wings, and by 6 p.m., as I went carelessly into the aviary, the cock darted over my head like an arrow into some tall willows far below. It was doubtless his first flight since the days of his liberty in Australia, so I gave him up for lost, and was really too busy to watch him. Still he stayed about; was seen the next day on a sunny bank among dry grass, and within forty-eight hours from his escape, returned close to the aviary in which he had not been six hours, and almost at once went into a cage brought for him! Of course, when the land or houses of

others are near there is danger, but where all the surroundings are one's own I find it best to take little notice of escaped Doves; after two days they are sure to be hungry—then I have doors of empty aviaries all left open and seed put down, and the result, as I have already said, is almost invariably the same: the truant comes back, and is delighted to live in luxury again.

Certainly the Diamond Dove is a charming and fascinating pet, and one which, from its not having frequently reared its young in captivity, leaves much scope for the skill of the bird charmer. Its price in these days is very moderate, compared with a few years ago.

HOW THE BIRDS LEARN; OR, NESTING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

By Reginald Phillipps.

My garden aviary can be divided into two parts, or used as one, as may be desired; the part next to the house is bare—thanks to the Parrakeets, but the other is thickly planted with small trees and shrubs. In this latter I commonly place a few pairs of little birds, in addition to the larger species, which are my favourites. Amongst the little ones there were last summer a pair of imported Zebra Finches, who, like so many of the Australians, did not commence building until the autumn. The first nest, built amongst some Virginia creeper which was rapidly losing its foliage, was interesting, inasmuch as it was perfectly open, without covering or back; it was seen by a well-known writer on birds, who spontaneously remarked that every nest of the Zebra Finch he had ever seen had been covered; and so we are always told—but how many of these nests have been built in a natural bush! Long before the nest was completed, the bad boy of the family, the Satin Bower-bird, himself an irrepressible carrier of twigs and straws, had noticed the labours of the Zebra Finches, watched the nest, and carried off the eggs as soon as deposited. After a pause and a consultation, a second nest was commenced, this time in a pollard holly off which every bough had been lopped, on the top of the stump, and protected by a fairly thick growth of young shoots, about a foot long, above and around the nest. This nest, as originally constructed, was quite open; and notwithstanding the leaves, the brilliant little eggs were only too conspicuous; but the Bower-bird never went near this nest: the many prickly leaves and the absence of perching accommodation kept him at a distance. Nevertheless, the eggs

did disappear; and the parents were much disconcerted. They evidently knew who the culprit was, and considered how best to frustrate his plans. Suddenly they set to work to build a canopy over the nest and for a few days quite separate from it and unattached, but eventually connected with the nest proper. Again an egg was laid; and I found it thickly covered over with feathers, and invisible. When we were youngsters, we were all keen after birds' eggs; not a nest could escape our sharp, well-trained eyes, and the birds had a poor time of it; and I well remember finding a Long-tailed Tits' nest in which the first egg laid was most carefully concealed in a similar way, and doubtless for a similar reason. As with that nest so with this, when the second egg was laid no attempt was made to hide either. On the laying of the first egg, the larger birds had been shut out from the inner aviary; they were now re-admitted; but the covering sufficed to hide the eggs from the unknown thief; and by the time the fourth egg appeared the nest had become an ordinary domed affair, shaped like that of a Willow Wren. However, occasionally I noticed the sitting female creep like a mouse on to the roof, and stealthily strengthen and repair the same. At the time I thought she was trying to keep out the pelting rain; but one day in November I heard the wild excited cries of the Struthidea *(Struthidea cinerea)*, and, rushing out, found that these two birds, regardless of holly pricks, had pounced on to the top of the nest, and, frantically tearing at the structure, were endeavouring to force their way in: they were too mad to notice the entrance to the nest. I drove them away, and was surprised to find the tiny mother still on: she had kept her ground regardless of the uproar and the proximity of her dangerous foes, who would have torn her to pieces if they could have caught her. Her bravery and devotion so touched me that I shut off the large birds, and left her to enjoy a well-earned peace. Three out of the four eggs were hatched; but before the young were twelve days old an exceptionally heavy and lengthy gale with torrents of rain killed them. Another nest was then built on the top of the first, and an egg was laid on December 24th; but the wet and south-westerly gales were too much for the birds, who deserted the nest on New Year's Day. A new nest, however, was immediately commenced among some Virginia creeper stems facing N.E., and completely sheltered from the then prevailing winds; but, after the first egg had been laid, observing that the female had had enough of the cold and wet, and fearing egg-binding, I took her and her husband off to a large cage in the house, 6ft. long by 2ft. by 2ft. While in this

cage, neither bird betrayed the very smallest inclination to nest; their hearts were evidently in their old home in the wet, cold, raw garden.

About the middle of February, wanting their cage, I returned them to the garden; they flew straight to their last nest, and immediately set to work to put it in order. This one had been built with a dome from the beginning, and differed considerably from the one in the holly tree, being shaped like that of the Common Wren, especially as regards the aperture. Notwithstanding the leafless season, it was admirably concealed; the Struthidea and other birds never found it, excepting only the Bower-bird, who was removed. The young were hatched; but on March 17th I found them all dead—the consequence of the incessant cold and wet. Once more the poor birds paused in order to reconsider the situation. They had outwitted the Bower-bird, diddled the Struthidea, and outmanœuvred the south-west wind; but the ceaseless, pitiless rain had been too much for them. What was to be the next move?

Now, although there were many husks and boxes of various kinds scattered about their aviary, and one in the cage they had occupied when in the house, not one of these had they ever entered or visited: even as sleeping-places, all these had been ignored; the natural trees and bushes alone had had attractions for them. But things were not as they had been in Australia; the seasons, somehow, were all topsy-turvy; and other arrangements would have to be made. Nothing would now satisfy the Zebra Finches but an abode in some artificial structure, and under the shelter of the house if possible, notwithstanding that, at that time, they were cut off from the house excepting from sunrise until such time as I let the majority of the birds out of the bird-room, *i.e.*, until 8.30 a.m. or later, according to the weather. Morning after morning they collected a quantity of nesting-material on a little sheltered ledge at the entrance to a barrel fixed against the side of the house, and day after day it was scattered to the winds by the Bower-bird. After a while, I confined them altogether to their own aviary, and there they went house-hunting, but here also now only in sheltered artificial structures; most of the nesting-places were given up one after the other because they seemed to be too well known, or too near to the favourite perches of the old Chinese Blue Pie, who just then had to be placed with them. Eventually, they fixed on a spot in the very roof of the aviary, where, indeed, there was a shelter but little more, so

their efforts to build a nest upon nothing did not come to much. Here, with much difficulty, I managed to fix up an old travelling cage, of which they immediately took possession: and here, with a box full of young, we will leave them, sheltered from the rain, in a place quite inaccessible to the larger birds, but somewhat exposed to the winds; and here, if they will learn one lesson more, that the best time for nesting is during our summer, they may securely rear young to their hearts' content.

I do not wish to lead our younger aviculturists astray, so will add that, although I did inspect these nests from time to time, I did so with my "brains;" and also that, if the birds had been of value, I should not have inspected the nests at all. Birds generally are not like Canaries and Barbary Doves; for the most part they like to believe that you are wholly unconscious of the existence of their nests. Zebra Finches, moreover, are [illegible]ous for the promptness with which they often desert their [illegible] inspected; but my little hen, indeed most of my birds, [illegible] me as their friend and protector, as a convenient and [illegible]ortable resting-place, and my hat and my ears as particular delicacies provided specially for their benefit and edification.

SAND GROUSE.

By E. G. B. Meade-Waldo.

The Sand Grouse family form a group of birds of singular beauty, and one which, with proper management and accommodation, thrive exceedingly in confinement. It might be supposed that birds which live either on burning deserts or in such inhospitable regions as the Pamirs or Gobi deserts, subject to the greatest extremes of heat and cold, would not lend themselves to the comparative confinement and immense change of surroundings of an aviary in this climate. Nevertheless, they not only live for years and maintain the most perfect health, going through their curious seasonal changes of plumage regularly, but they will nest and successfully rear their young. Sand Grouse become most exceedingly tame in an aviary, and some individuals of the Black-breasted Sand Grouse (*Petrocles arenarius*) are among the only birds I have had who had no objection of any kind to being picked up; standing still when approached and allowing themselves to be taken up without a struggle; the same birds would chase my small children and peck their heels!

Sand Grouse inhabit the desert regions of Africa, also

suitable regions in Asia. Two species inhabit the inhospitable plateaux of the Pamirs and Gobi desert, and one species Madagascar. It is the Sand Grouse of the Gobi desert that has sporadically visited this country and Western Europe, notably in the years 1863 and 1888, in large numbers, and is known as Pallas' Sand Grouse *(Syrraptes paradoxus)*.

Two species of Sand Grouse are European and inhabit principally the suitable parts of Southern Spain, but are very local in their distribution. These are the Sand Grouse I fancy to be most suitable for aviaries in this country, and they are certainly amongst the most beautiful of their kind. Anything more beautiful than the male of the Greater Pin-tailed Sand Grouse *(Petrocles alchata)* in his full breeding dress of sage-green and cream colour with vivid contrasts of black and white and chestnut, put together with the greatest contrast, is difficult to imagine. Whilst his female, in her dress of bright sand colour with delicate pencilling of black and slate-blue, is hardly less beautiful. It is of this species that I especially wish to refer.

Except during the periods of laying, sitting, and whilst the young are small, Sand Grouse are very quiet birds, and, as far as I can see, never interfere with any other inhabitant of their aviary. In fact, it is necessary to see that nothing molests them. They do not require a large aviary, and the description of one that I find very suitable may be of use to those who might contemplate keeping these beautiful birds. Mine are in compartments 20ft. long by 8ft. wide; six feet of one end is roofed in with a double span roof, and is boarded on three sides, the fourth side, that with the southern aspect, opening into the outer compartment, is open to the eves, which are 8ft. from the ground. The outer compartment is of short turf, with a thoroughly drained gravel path round it: it is on this path that the Sand Grouse spend most of their time in wet weather, but in fine weather much time is spent basking on the turf. The floor of the covered-in portion should be *the ground*: this will become hard and dry from being roofed over, and will be much resorted to for feeding, dusting, etc., in wet weather, but almost never for roosting in, for however inclement the weather may be, they will invariably pass the night in the most exposed place they can find, and no weather seems to inconvenience them much, except perhaps continued cold wet. They will never try to avoid the hottest rays of the sun, and I have seen them dusting comfortably in 25 degrees of frost.

To prevent them from injuring themselves, it is advisable to cut the feathers of their wings; and a good way to do this is to leave the first and second primary in each wing perfect, cut half the third so as to make a support for the first and second, and cut the remaining seven primaries in each wing: by this means there is no disfigurement whatever and the birds do not turn over in their attempts to fly, they can fly a little but do not rush with sufficient force to injure themselves.

The height of the outer compartment of the aviaries should be not less than 8ft., and the same to the eaves of the inner. There should be no high ledges, for Sand Grouse are very awkward at getting over anything: and the turf should be only raised a little above the gravel path. The turf will require renewing once a year. The outer compartments should be boarded about one foot high all round, as a shelter from winds and to prevent birds from running up and down in one place.

Of course other birds that are not antagonistic may be kept with the Sand Grouse during the breeding-season: a pair of small waders (I have Pratincoles in with mine), and a pair or two of any small passerine bird.

A great variety of food is eaten: of seeds the favourites are hemp, maw, spray millet, and rape. Green food is as necessary as seed, and they live largely on it. The favourites are sorrel, hops, clover, shepherd's purse, chickweed, dandelion; and they eat short turf like a goose. Rock salt should be always before them, and a plentiful supply of crushed egg-shell and sharp grit.

The nesting-season commences in May, but breeding pairs should be separated in April. Three eggs form the full clutch, and are laid with the interval of a day between each. Both sexes incubate, the female sitting by day, and the brightly-plumaged male by night; the eggs are never left at all. The young are hatched on the twenty-fourth day, and are most beautiful little creatures, extremely advanced even on the day of their birth, dusting and foraging for themselves; they feed on the half-ripe seeds of various plants, that of chickweed and shepherd's purse being the favourites: also mawseed. They are covered with chocolate and cream-coloured down of a very downy texture, each tuft on the back resembling a small Ostrich feather. At ten days old these independent little birds refuse to be brooded by their parents, and seek out a place among the stones to roost by themselves.

I have elsewhere described the curious way in which these

birds are watered by their parents, but there may be some who have not read it. The cock, as soon as the young are hatched, developes the following curious habit: He rubs the feathers of his breast up and down on the hard ground until they are all awry; he then soaks himself in his drinking-water, goes to the young, calls them, and they suck the water from his [illegible]. The reason of this is obvious: Sand Grouse, although they live and breed on comparatively waterless deserts, cannot exist without water, and traverse immense distances morning and evening to drink, being able to do this by means of their unrivalled power of flight. The young, hatched far out on waterless plains, would certainly perish for want of water were it not for this extraordinary habit in the males. Rubbing the feathers doubtless makes them saturate more freely, and not dry too soon on the voyage from the drinking-place to where his family is located.

After the breeding-season, I let all my birds run together by allowing them to pass from one aviary to another, and the play then is very amusing: running after one another in play and "butting" with their shoulders. Their actions also when dusting are very curious, as they roll on to their backs and dust with their shoulders, keeping both feet up. The tiny newly-hatched young of an hour or two old will do this. The gravel path that surrounds the turf lawn in their aviary should be of a kind of gravel that binds well, for if the hole they scratch silts up, they will have nothing to do with it.

I could write much more on these birds, but fear to trespass further.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE TUI, AND OTHER POLLEN-EATING BIRDS.

SIR,—There have been several letters in the *Avicultural Magazine* during the past few months regarding the treatment of these delightful birds. Most of the writers have laid stress upon the reputed delicacy of Tuis, and especially upon their liability to lay on fat and to become subject to fits. At the same time we have been advised to feed on condensed milk, mashed potatoes, sweet biscuit powder, sugar in plenty, and other articles of diet which certainly would not be allowed in the case of a human subject under anti-fat treatment.

My object in writing is to note that apparently Tuis can be kept in the best possible condition, as regards health and plumage, upon a diet which certainly seems to be less likely, than some of the foods lately prescribed, to induce the accumulation of fat, which is so much to be avoided if possible. At the same time, I wish to be careful to state that the birds under notice have only been in my possession for four months.

My Tuis, a male and female, were part of a consignment which reached one of the London dealers early this spring, and were advertised in the *Avicultural Magazine*. When they reached me they were, though stained and shabby, in good health and vigorous; and so I am glad to say they remain up to now.

They are fed on stale bread-crumb about two parts, Abraham's one part, moistened slightly with a little grated carrot. A little served yolk of egg is added, and a dash of Carl Capelle's food and ant's gs; the last two not quite regularly, but several times a week. The ole of this, the preparation of which only occupies a few minutes, is horoughly mixed, and pounded up in a mortar, and, of course, enough only is prepared to carry the birds through the 24 hours. No mealworms are given, and no extras of any kind, except that each bird has daily a piece of banana or ripe orange, which is given to them while their cages are being cleaned out—though such a thing is not wanted now; when the birds were strange to me the gift of these dainties had a great effect in taming them. I only give them enough fruit in this way to occupy them for a few minutes, during which time it is amusing to see the clever way in which they use their long tongues.

In other ways too I think this amount of fruit has a wholesome effect on birds which are being kept upon a diet which, as compared with what they get in a wild state, is of dry, and what a school-boy would call a "stodgy," character.

My birds under this treatment have moulted clean out, and have a lovely sheen upon their feathers, and they always seem in the highest spirits. They are in motion the whole day long, and, as long as the room is lighted, singing and calling to each other and running through their marvellously varied repertoire of musical sounds, to the delight of all who hear them.

Each of my birds has a large cage with ample space for exercise, and frequent opportunities, which are seldom declined, of bathing. I am looking forward, now that the summer seems really to have come, to enlarging my pets into a garden aviary, in the hope that they may be tempted to go to nest when their natural breeding-season approaches. If I should meet with any success I will ask you to admit a further letter on the subject."

W. H. St. Quintin.

Sir,—Replying to the enquiries of Mr. Wiener, I was in the habit of giving my Tuis about a large egg-cup full of food twice a day. The quality of the potatoes did not matter so long as they were sound. I used moist sugar (about a teaspoonful), and the potato was pounded with the sugar and a small quantity of hot water into a perfect paste. The birds lost no strength in confinement, and although they slept in a cage, for hours in the day they flew about the room, and if called would perch on my hand and imitate my voice and movements. Naturally, of course, they are pollen-eating birds, and I presume that the potato and sugar mixture is as near an approach to pollen as can be made.

At the present time I have a beautiful specimen of the Blue Mountain which one of my sons brought from Sydney four years ago. He also is a flower-sucking bird, but I have not tried him with potato and sugar.

* A solitary female, which I had for over three years, "nested" every season, usually in a small basket hung up in the bird-room; she was broody for some weeks every year. I find it difficult to believe that a diet of potatoes, etc., can be good for a Tui; anyway, a Tui will get on remarkably well *without* potatoes.—R. P.

He is fed on canary seed and lettuce leaves, but each morning he has about an egg-cup full of boiled bread and milk or crushed oats and milk, with lots of sugar, and he is absolutely healthy. He loves to be let out of his cage and fly about the room, and will lie down on the table to be tickled. Baths are most essential for all these birds. Tuis love to splash, and my Lory will get into his bath and scream until I bring a watering can and drench him. I have seen flocks of them in New South Wales bathing under a mountain torrent, and they will get right under the spray and shriek with enjoyment. If they do not get plenty of water in confinement they have rather an unpleasant smell, which can scarcely be detected if they are supplied with daily baths.

Reverting to the Tui, which is now much scarcer than formerly in New Zealand—it was always believed that its reduction in numbers was largely due to the English honey bee. Dead Tuis were picked up under the blossoming forest trees, and it was asserted that when the birds were hovering round the blossoms and inserting their tongues for the pollen they were often stung by bees and so died.

I can give my Lory no greater treat than a few sprays of mignonette, clover, or other rich flower, and it is amusing to watch him licking out the pollen.

T. B. WHYTEHEAD.

THE TREATMENT OF TANAGERS.

SIR,—In my 'Foreign Finches in Captivity,' commenting upon Dr. Russ' adverse criticism of these lovely birds, I expressed the opinion that the greediness and consequent dirt of which he and others complain as being natural to Tanagers were merely the result of unnatural confinement in cages far too small for these naturally active birds.

From time to time during about five years my eyes used to be gladdened by the sight of an extremely lively example of the Scarlet Tanager in Mr. Housden's collection, which was kept in a cage of respectable dimensions, but I often wished for an opportunity of testing the supposed delicacy of Tanagers for myself and was only deterred therefrom by the high prices asked for these reputed bad-livers.

However, early in June my opportunity came, a fairly perfect Superb Tanager was offered to me at a by no means prohibitive price; its crown and chin were indeed bare of feathers, but otherwise there was nothing to complain of: the bird was wild as a hawk, as a recently imported Tanager ought to be.

I put my bird into one of my largest flight-cages, gave it a saucer containing a mixture of Abrahams' food, preserved yolk, ants' cocoons and crumbled stale bread, a small piece of banana and half an orange; also a pan of clean water. This is its daily supply, but it never eats more than a third of the fruit and just tastes the soft food. I have also offered both mealworms and cockroaches, the former it simply ignores, of the latter very rarely eats one.

Up to the time of writing this account my Tanager is lively, feeds freely, bathes at least once a day and has recovered the feathers on its head. It is less nervous, only becoming excited when I change its food or water.

I have tried my bird with ripe strawberries of which it will eat about a third of one in a day in addition to its regular diet; but, as observed by travellers, the favourite fruit of this species is undoubtedly the orange.

The result of my limited experience of Tanagers certainly confirms my original opinion that the greed, filthiness and delicacy of Tanagers are due to the mistaken notion that they ought to be kept in cramped little cages surrounded by a variety of food in large quantities; no opportunity being given to the unhappy captive even to wash itself, however sticky and ...y it may feel. Would not similar treatment soon convert the healthiest ... most vigorous bird into a hopeless invalid? I think so.

A. G. BUTLER.

DETERMINING THE SEX OF PARROT FINCHES.

SIR,—As I have given some attention to this point of late, I was very much interested in Mr. Savage's remarks. I have two Parrot Finches which I think I may call an undoubted pair, though they have not bred with me. The legs and the feet of the hen are decidedly lighter in colour than those of the cock.

The difficulty of distinguishing the sexes by simple inspection, as for instance when judging at a Show, has been well illustrated by my birds. They were exhibited at the Palace by Mr. Osbaldeston, to whom at that ... belonged, and Dr. Butler, whose skill and experience are ...le, in critizing my awards called them "an undoubted pair—...e cock was less brilliant in colour, and the hen had not by any ...ans attained her full colouring." I afterwards purchased the birds and they have certainly turned out an "undoubted pair," *only* Dr. Butler had sexed each bird wrongly.

The bird which had not attained its full colouring, moulted in April and became very much more brilliant, deeper and richer in colour than its mate, the red colouring of the head extends further in every direction and the legs are decidedly darker in colour. The hen bird (which Dr. Butler sexed as the cock) is a trifle larger, duller and paler in colour, has a less extent of red colouring, and lighter coloured legs and feet. This bird, like Mr. Savage's, "remains mute" while the cock has a "pretty little note."

The sexual differences, therefore, between my birds corroborate Mr. Savage's observations in almost every detail.

C. S. SIMPSON.

WAXBILLS IN A MADEIRAN AVIARY.

SIR,—Perhaps some of your readers would be interested to hear a little more about the inhabitants of my aviaries.

Unfortunately, I cannot yet claim to have been successful in breeding the Violet-eared Waxbills. One of the two pairs that I let loose in the aviary, as mentioned in my last letter, built at once and the hen laid two eggs. They deserted that nest and began another; this time they worked very hard, and so completely covered in the nest that it was impossible to see how many eggs were laid. The two birds sat steadily and ... quite hopeful about them; in about fifteen days, however, I noticed ...h flying about, and that they never went near the nest, which I ...ook out and examined. I found one dead young one, evidently ...l days old, and I am afraid the reason this (and also the former nest) ... deserted was that it was disturbed by other birds.

My aviaries are, unfortunately, much too crowded—I have sixty-four different kinds of birds, about two hundred and twenty in all—but we are putting up two good-sized new ones, and I hope soon to be able to spare

one of the smaller ones in which to place a pair of Violet-ears entirely by themselves.

I am very sorry to have to tell you that I have since lost the male bird of the pair I have been speaking of: he was found dead on the floor of the aviary one morning, though he had seemed quite well the evening before; and was very plump and in lovely plumage. This was a great grief to my lit[tle] niece, a child of six, who is often in the aviary with me. It is a pret[ty] sight to see these little birds on her shoulders and hat trying to get so[me] her golden hair for their nests. She cried very bitterly over this sad lo[ss] and I felt very much inclined to do the same.

Since the introduction of the Violet-ears, such is the force o[f] example, many of the birds which were very timid and shy have become quite tame—the Crimson-wing, Pheasant-finches and several other kinds which used to be rather wild now come quite confidingly to take small mealworms, etc., from my hand.

Of my smaller birds, those which have bred most successfully are, I think, the Orange-cheeked Waxbills.* The first time they chose a somewhat curious place for their nest. In one corner of the aviary there is always a little heap of fine hay thrown down, or rather propped against [the] so that the birds may take it for building—in this the Oran[ges] formed their nest, only about three inches from the ground. I think it at all likely they would remain undisturbed, but, in due cours[e] they successfully brought out four lovely chicks. Since then, however, they have chosen higher and more secure nesting-places.

Another bird, which I think is seldom seen in England and which is a great favourite of mine, is the Red-faced Finch.† This bird also becomes exceedingly tame and sings a particularly sweet warbling song. Unfortunately, I have never been able to get any hens, indeed, I have never seen one; I have three splendid males—one of these is in a cage in the house. I say in a cage, but I should mention that the door of the cage is seldom shut, and that the bird flies about everywhere and never seems to think of going out although the windows and doors are generally wide open. He will always return to his cage when told to do so, and if I close the door he at once begins to sing as if asking to be let out again.

I have another little bird which seems to me to be uncommon. I believe it is a Partridge- or Quail-finch.‡ but I can find nothing about them in any of the newer books. Mr. Gedney briefly refers to them in his, and I think this bird of mine must be one of these. It was sent to me from the West Coast of Africa, in a cage with a lot of Waxbills, and seems to have got there by chance. It is quite a small bird, about the size of an Avadavat, but more robust in shape—very small head and short tail; prevailing colours, black, white, and grey, with a distinct bright chesnut shade tinging the very speckled breast. It is very like a little Partridge, and behaves like one, running about on the floor of the aviary all day, very seldom flying at all. It is a gentle happy little bird, continually re[peating] a few comical notes which can hardly be called a song. I am sorry [to] far I have never been able to get any more of these birds.

LOUISA C. RE[ED]

* This is strange, for Dr. Russ says that the breeding of this Waxbill "is one of the most difficult of all."—ED.

† *Pytelia afra*, generally known as Wiener's Waxbill.—ED.

‡ *Ortygospiza polyzona*. See *Avicultural Magazine*, Vol. II., pp. 94 and 111.—ED.

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

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MEMBERS' SALE AND EXCHANGE COLUMN.

The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 6 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable. Each advertisement should be written on a separate sheet of paper, with the name and address of the advertiser at the foot.*

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(Continued on page 4 of cover).

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. III.—No. 35. *All rights reserved.* SEPTEMBER, 1897.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to Members monthly.

Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them. Dead birds cannot be received for identification or *post mortem* examination, on account of the risk of infection.

Bound Volumes of Vol. I. of the *Avicultural Magazine* can be obtained from the Secretary, price 21/-; there are only a very few copies remaining. Bound copies of Vol. II. are now ready, price 6/- to members, 7/6 to non-members. Most of the monthly parts of Vols. I. and II. can still be obtained from the Secretary, unbound, price 6d. each; but No. 2 (December, 1894) and No. 4 (February, 1895), are out of print.

If there are any members who have not received all the back numbers, they are requested to apply to the Treasurer for the same.

If any members have any suggestions to make for improving the Magazine, or extending the usefulness of the Society in other ways, they are requested to write to the Secretary, who will submit their proposals to the Executive Committee.

A complete list of members, with their addresses, will appear in the November Magazine. In order that this list may be as correct as possible, it is particularly requested that all whose names and addresses have been wrongly spelt in the list of "New Members" will have the kindness to inform the Secretary of the error.

All members who intend to resign at the end of the year, are requested to give notice of their intention to the Secretary before the 14th of October, in accordance with Rule 10.

With a view to the forthcoming election of officers, the Secretary desires to remind the members that, under Rule 6, all (new) candidates for office must be duly proposed and seconded in writing, and that such proposals must reach him before the 14th of September. If any of the members of the Council do not intend to seek re-election, they are requested to inform the Secretary of their decision at the earliest possible date.

In accordance with the Rules, the Executive Committee have to announce that the following person, not having paid his subscription for the current year, has ceased to be a member of the Society:—

Mr. G. SCHMIDT, 15, Bloompark Road, Fulham, S.W.

Special attention is called to the notice as to coloured plates which accompanies this Magazine.

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(Continued on page 3 of cover).

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DEAR SIR.—Just a line to express my satisfaction of the admirable manner in which you have executed the work I have entrusted to you. I observe with pleasure the natural attitude of the birds, which undoubtedly is due to your knowledge of Natural History, an acquaintance of which must be a great acquisition to a Taxidermist.

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THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. III.—No. 35. *All rights reserved.* SEPTEMBER, 1897.

SQUATTING GRASS-FINCHES; OR, SOUR GRAPES.

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

A member complains that we do not send accounts of our nesting experiences to the Magazine. I have had a nesting experience in my garden which I do not understand, and shall be obliged if this or any other member of the community will explain the matter. The point which exercises my mind is this: Have I found out something new, entitling me to any number of gold medals, or have I found a—Mare's Nest? In the latter case I should not advance a claim for the medal, for the nest has been found before;—though never before, I am satisfied, has it been so eloquently described as it will have been described when I shall have finished this paper.

On May 4th last, I obtained four Grass-finches, two, I think a pair, of the rare and graceful Long-tailed species, *Poephila acuticauda*, the other two, of uncertain sex, of the possibly more rare but certainly less graceful Masked species, *P. personata*.

These four birds I placed in a 4ft. long aviary-cage in my dining-room, and looked for them to nest, but they did not nest. I then took to leaving the door of their cage occasionally open in order that they might fly about; but again I was disappointed—they did not fly about. In the bow-window there is a large, I think I may say a very large, Blue Gum tree; I have indeed read in books that larger are known to grow in Australia, but then writers must speak big in books or no one would buy them. Any way, during the spring, numbers of little Finches had been disporting themselves in this tree; and I naturally expected that these Grass-finches would go and do likewise—but they didn't; they would do nothing but squat, and would squat any where and every where but in the Blue Gum. At first they squatted on the window-sills; when I drove them from

the window-sills, then they squatted on the flower-pots; when I drove them from the flower-pots, then they squatted on the floor; when I drove them from the floor, then they squatted on the pictures hung up against the walls. The Masked Grass-finches were the worst; I never saw such creatures in my life; side by side they squatted until it became monotonous; and, fearing that they might take root and become fixtures, I eventually turned them out into the garden. Here they still squatted, usually on the ground, always side by side, on a gentle declivity, in the sun when possible. Then there came a time when they became excited, and dashed about, and finally disappeared in a dense and impenetrable jungle at the end of the garden; and visions of baby Masks and gold medals dangled before my eyes. Sometimes for days and days I would not see them, and then only when creeping about on the ground feeding; but weeks and weeks have passed, and no baby Masks have appeared; and if you were to ask me what I now think I should find if I were to invade the pathless depths of the jungle, I should answer that I think I should just find those two birds squatting.

Of the Long-tailed Grass-finches I had many hopes; but, objecting to their squatting on the window-sills, I shut them up entirely. Feeble signs of nesting appeared occasionally, but nothing came of it, and it ended in my turning them likewise out into the garden. Now these birds had never been in the garden before, yet no sooner were they let loose than they flew straight to the nearest tree, and commenced building forthwith. They did not make any attempt to explore their new domain; and, although very strong birds, I doubt if they have even yet visited the jungle, or been to the end of the garden, which is only a few yards long. The lime tree to which they flew had been cut hard back during the winter (by the Parrakeets), and had thrown out a fairly thick head of young branches. In this they built a Magpie-like nest, about the size of a Rugby football, entirely of straw externally, but lined with finer straw and dried grass. Of what possible use a lattice-work dome of straw could have been I cannot imagine; but perhaps it was for ornament, not for use. After the completion of the nest, there was a quiet pause; then the birds practically disappeared; and once more grand visions of gold medals galore danced before my eyes.

Now, I hope the readers of this Magazine will not think that I am poking fun at them when I say that I am a good-natured man. About this time it so happened that a friend of mine had a pair of Nonpareils which he wanted to get rid of;

and, taking advantage of my lamentable good-nature, he made a present of them to me. Being as it were visitors, I felt constrained to treat them to my best, and so loosed them into the aviary where the Finches were. They were weak from long caging, and it was late in the season for them, nevertheless they resolved upon going to nest. They took a fancy to the Long-tails' nest in the lime tree, and, not caring to face the owners at the entrance, coolly set to work to pull it to pieces from the rear. After a few days, the Long-tails deserted the nest; and I doubted not but that the Nonpareils had stolen the eggs. The female Nonpareil had built her nest within a foot of the path, and close to the entrance door, and was sitting on three eggs. I approached the nest with set teeth, and with the unchangeable determination of catching her on her nest and transferring her and her belongings to other quarters; she took no notice of me as usual beyond looking up into my face; but this she did with a look so full of trust and confidence that I had not the heart to disturb her, and beat an ignominious retreat.

Once more the Long-tails set to work on their nest in the lime tree, and quickly repaired it; and once more they settled down, and soon disappeared from public view. But the Nonpareils could not tear themselves away from this nest, once more was the nest deserted, and once more I judged that the eggs had been stolen. Then I examined the Nonpareils' eggs, and, finding them clear, quietly enticed the owners into an adjoining aviary. The Long-tails had now commenced a third nest in some thick Virginia Creeper, so thick that I could not see more of the nest than the ends of a stray straw here and there. As in the former cases, the birds commenced by carrying up a quantity of long straw, and finished with finer material; and here the birds settled down; while I settled down to prepare an application for the gold medal.* Nevertheless, brazen it out as I would, there was one little rift in the lute which produced a tiny note of discord and uneasiness in the inner recesses of my heart. What in the world did the old birds mean by occasionally returning to their old nest in the lime tree!!!

All went happy as a marriage bell until Sunday, August th. Until that day the storms had spared my aviary; but now me the rain. I went to Church as usual; but as the rain me thundering down on the roof, I fear I thought more of the sts than of the sermon;—but truly the sermon was *very* prosy; t is an indisputable fact that clergymen do *sometimes* preach prosy sermons, and this was one of them. On returning home, I found what I had feared, the two birds on a perch preening

their feathers in a disconsolate way: the young doubtless had been drowned. After waiting a few hours, and finding that the parents shewed no inclination to return to their nest, I resolved to inspect it. Quietly and cautiously I approached, so as not to disturb other birds nesting around, and at last reached the spot, the nest being on a level with my face. Carefully I pushed aside the luxuriant creeper, and found—well, not exactly what I had expected to find. Instead of a nice little tight little nest with a concave receptacle for eggs and young, I found an oblong convex lump of fine grass, surrounded by a lot of straw, but with a substantial back, which served presumably as a screen from the wind. I turned to the old nest in the lime tree; it was of a precisely similar character. Then the horrible truth flashed upon me: they were *Squatting Places* for the old birds, not nests at all.

The birds have since gone back to their squatting pla[ce] in the Virginia Creeper, and are still squatting away as ha[p]py as squatters.

I cannot understand why the members are so anxious to get hold of that gold medal! I know, if it were offered to me, I just wouldn't take it.

THE HALF-MASKED WEAVER.

Hyphantornis vitellinus, Licht.

By A. G. Butler, Ph.D.

This beautiful Weaver-bird inhabits N.-Eastern to N.-Western Africa almost to the equator, and is allied to the better known Abyssinian Weaver, from which, however, it can at once be distinguished by the colouring of the head; the black mask being confined to the front and sides of the face and bordered at the back by a diffused edging of chestnut, which covers the front of the crown. The prevailing colour of the bird is bright golden yellow, the feathers of the wings and tail being black with yellow edges.

According to Von Heuglin it appears in flocks in t[he] neighbourhood of the White and the Blue Niles towards the e[nd] of May or in June, being still in winter plumage, and separa[tes] into small companies. Soon after its arrival the change i[nto] summer plumage commences, and then it begins its courtshi[p] among the acacias and thorn-trees growing in damp places near the banks of a stream, by the rain-water pools, upon islands and

in fields of dense-growing maize. The nest is carefully and substantially built of green grass-stems and is suspended at a good height from a slender overhanging branch; it is purse-shaped and tapering at the upper part, so that it moves with the least breath of air; moreover, these nests are so numerous that one shades the other throughout a great part of the day.

Many nests are unoccupied, and are supposed to be used by the males to roost in by night or in bad weather; but it is more probable that the weaving instinct, which is strong in these birds, impels them to construct many more nests than they require.

Von Heuglin believes that the males only build, but Antinori declares that both sexes are engaged in the work of construction. Probably, as is the case with the species of the genus *Ploceus*, the males build the greater part of the nest, the females only assisting at the finish.

The entrance to the nest is in front, directed somewhat downwards and sometimes with a small tubular extension. The eggs appear to vary in number from three to seven, five being the most usual number according to Von Heuglin. In captivity the number is either three or four, the colouring being whitish, lemon yellow, bluish, or bright green, spotted (chiefly towards the larger end) with scattered dark green markings, more numerous rusty brown spotting, or rust-brownish and greyish spots most densely massed at the larger extremity.

Although not by any means abundantly imported as a cage-bird, this Weaver has been bred without the least difficulty in German bird-rooms, building with either fresh grass or hay: incubation lasts twelve days.

I purchased a male example of the Half-masked Weaver about two years ago and turned it into an aviary with my Java Sparrows and a *Liothrix*: it is no trouble, being always in magnificent health, and since I purchased it has never yet assumed its winter plumage—a peculiarity which seems not uncommon with the species of *Hyphantornis* when kept in aviaries: for food it has canary, millet, oats, and soft food, but no insects to my knowledge, though it may perhaps sometimes capture a stray cockroach.

The song is industriously persevered in throughout the breeding-season, but it is rather comical than pretty, usually commencing with a few shrill excited chirps, followed by a sustained rattling castanet note, like winding up an old kitchen-

clock and interspersed with squeaks, squirt-like hissings and a few clear notes.

I have not found this Weaver particularly aggressive, whilst it is undoubtedly a hardy and usually long-lived bird; bright, attractive, and amusing. It is a little smaller than its Abyssinian relative.

THE FOOD OF THE BLACKCAP.

By E. G. B. Meade-Waldo.

In countries where the Blackcap is the most frequent cage bird, and where nearly every other peasant's cottage has one or two hanging up on the wall, the food given is almost entirely fruit. These birds live for years and years in the most perfect health, if not plumage, and sing to perfection.

They are kept in fair sized cages, made of nothing but split cane. The bottom is of the same material, but in hot weather (or rather when the sun is on them, for it is always hot) a large leaf or two are placed on the roof of the cage. The principal food used is ripe figs, these are squashed on to the outside of the bars and the birds pick what they want from inside; oranges are also given, and bananas, custard apples, and all kinds of fresh fruit, also dried figs which are moistened with water before being plastered on. No animal food is ever given, but I have seen the birds watching the fruit when it begins to ferment, and catching quantities of flies and moths which are attracted by the juice. I knew several of these caged examples for five years: they were always thriving and almost always in song, and their owners told me that they had had them for years before I saw them, and I have no reason to disbelieve it.

These birds are out of doors day and night, all the year round. I have kept many myself and found them quite hardy. They breed freely in a large aviary, rearing the young, first upon caterpillars, etc., afterwards upon fruit. The sexes must be separated, except when breeding, or the powerful females will drive the males to death. This separation of the sexes is observable in a wild state, the females wintering quite apart from the males, and usually at a far higher elevation above the sea level. To show on what unnatural food a bird will live and thrive I must quote a Blackcap, (one of the curious variety known as Heineken's Blackcap in which the ashen-grey of the body in the ordinary form is replaced by olive brown, and the

black cap by a black head and neck). I got this bird from a man who kept it in a room with a number of Canaries; it had nothing but canary seed to eat, and occasionally a little lettuce; it bolted the canary seed whole, and was in perfect health. I bought it from him and kept it for three years when it escaped. It wintered out in England in an open aviary and always used to eat a lot of canary seed. This curious variety is peculiar to the Island of Madeira and to the interior of the great crater on the Island of "La Palma," Canaries. It is popularly supposed by the peasants to be the product of the fifth egg of a Blackcap! No hen of this variety has been seen.

The Blackcaps which winter in England live principally on the fruit of the cotoneaster, and in the extremely severe weather of January and February of 1895, one lived on the myrtle-berries on my house until the tree was suddenly cleared by the starving Missel Thrushes. The first arrivals of this bird in March have often severe weather to contend with. They live on ivy-berries. From this I infer that fruit in some form must always largely enter into the dietary of the Blackcap.

BREEDING IN THE OPEN AIR AT MICKLEFIELD VICARAGE, 1897.

By the Rev. C. D. Farrar.

Month after month I have opened the Magazine in the hope of seeing a record of breeding operations in some aviary or other; but so far in vain.

Before commencing an account of my 1897 operations, I may say in passing that birds and trees are still compatible, in fact the latter never looked better, and as there are some 150 birds among them they have had a fair trial.

Then again, it may interest members to know that mealworms have not proved "too stimulating." May be the stomachs of my young birds are specially made for digesting such unwholesome morsels!

And once more, Popes and Virginian Nightingales are not the murderous wretches they are often said to be.

I may say in passing, that in one of my garden aviaries I have had all the present season, Virginians, Popes, Green Cardinals, Blue Robins, and Brown-headed Starlings, and no murders have been committed, and yet there have been lots of chances in the form of helpless young birds in all directions.

Now for the breeding-record of this year, so far.

The Blue Robins were, I think, the first to begin operations. They laid and hatched in a cigar-box, very early in the season, when snow was on the ground. The young all hatched out and did well for a few days, when, for some reason or other, the old ones deserted them. The next time they built in a bigger box close by; there were four eggs, and three hatched out; they all flew and are now as big as their parents. (August 2nd). By the way, I often wonder how Blue Robins manage to hatch their eggs: as half the time the hen is gadding about; they must do well on a modicum of heat.

As soon as this lot was off their hands they nested again, and I did not discover the nest till they hatched out. They laid four eggs again, one clear, and they are just on the point of flying. (They flew to-day, August 2nd). The old birds carry out the excreta, just as Starlings do, and they don't seem to much relish the job, by the way they clean their beaks afterwards.

I sold all my young Blue Robins last year down so[illegible] and I often wonder how they have fared in their new home.

My next success was with Green Cardinals. These are a splendid pair and quite tame. The hen does not mind my going to her nest a bit. They commenced breeding very early in the season, and built their nest in a big elder bush. It is very like the nest of the Blackbird. The first time she laid three eggs, the colour of a Thrush only with purple spots on the larger end in place of black. One egg was unfertile, the other two hatched out. The youngsters grew rather slowly and did not leave the nest for about three weeks. One day on going to the nest, as I thought it time they flew, I found to my dismay, the nest empty. I concluded that the nest had been taken by some boys, as they are always taking nests in the garden. I was bitterly disappointed, as you may imagine, but what was my delight, on going into the aviary a few days after, to see the young Cardinals sitting as still as death on some dense elder, not even winking an eyelid. The young beggars had really flown: and the parents had hidden them so skilfully that though I searched the aviary from end to end, I failed to find them. The youngsters are a sort of greyish colour, with a very small crest and no dark beard rather like a very pale hen bird. They are fed a long time by the parents after leaving the nest. You can hear them being fed as they make a sort of plaintive cry, which sounds like *si-si-si*.

Am I entitled to the medal for *rearing* Green Cardinals?*

* No, the Green Cardinal was reared by Dr. Butler in 1895, and by others before him.—Ed.

As soon as this lot was off her hands, the hen laid again—three eggs, and hatched two, one clear. Then she nested again, four eggs: but they all proved clear. Nothing daunted, she has gone to nest again, and is sitting hard on three eggs. I call this a record performance. Green Cardinals eat as much grass as an old hen. The cock always sings just before laying begins, but not after. He has, like me, not much of a singing voice. They are excellent parents, but the hen is rather greedy.

My Zebra-finches have done very well this season. I really don't know how many young there are exactly, they are getting to be almost innumerable. I note, in passing, that my Zebras are probably a degenerate lot, as they never think of laying seven eggs. Three or four are nearer the average, and three more often than four. Roughly, I should say that I have had about forty, so far, and lots of birds now sitting.

I have had three or four nests of Silverbills, about five in each, and I saw a pair nesting this morning.

I had a beautiful pair of Virginians in this aviary, and they would have built; but the hen got a tumour on her throat and I had to kill her. I have another good hen, so I quite hope to rear some next season, if all goes well.

My cock Virginian is in splendid feather and as red as possible in colour—a perfect blaze of scarlet. They are very shy, nervous birds, not at all like the Green Cardinals.

The Popes have not attempted to build, but have behaved admirably in the midst of many temptations in the shape of juicy and helpless young birds.

The Starlings have not built. The cock has a quaint song of a few bars, and is a dab, as the boys say, at catching insects. He quarters the ground like a true Starling.

My Cordon Bleus built in a little box and have laid, and are now sitting hard.

The Ribbon Finches are also now sitting: they are quiet inoffensive birds.

The Green Avadavats have all built and laid and sat; but no young.

The Golden-breasted Waxbills have also laid and sat—no result.

The Pekin Robins built a lovely nest in a box-tree, but never laid any eggs.

My Diamond Sparrows have built a huge nest, literally

as big as a Sparrow-hawk's, made of twigs. I can't see if they have eggs, as it is too high up.

I have a splendid pair of Pin-tailed Nonpareils and a cock Fire-finch in perfect health.

My Bengalese have nested as usual, I have a lot of them now flying about. They are grand fliers.

My King and Queen went to nest about April, in a big log. They were very noisy at pairing time, especially in the evening. The hen laid eggs about the size of a pigeon's, but much rounder. She sat a bit, but the moult came on and this threw her off.

My Rosellas laid seven eggs, and would have hatched all right; but a heavy thunder-storm came on and the nest got wet, and the eggs were addled. Only the hen sits, the cock simply keeps guard outside.

My Redrumps laid very early in the season; sharp fr[ost] about; but the hen suffered nothing. They hatched out thr[ee] youngsters, and all was going well when a storm came and drowned them. They were fourteen days old, and beginning to feather. Better luck next time!

The Turquoisines have not, so far, done anything, though in perfect health and condition.

REVIEW.

Waxbills, Grass-finches, and Mannikins, by Horatio R. Fillmer. (Betts & Sons, Limited.)

This unpretending work contains a vast amount of practical information and advice, within a small space and for a small price. It differs from other handbooks of the same sort, in that its scope is limited to the three groups mentioned in the title, and it systematically describes the general appearance, and treatment in captivity, of every species in these groups which is at all common in confinement. The author has, very wisely as we think, confined himself in an avicultural work, t[o] aviculture: the reader will find no fearful and wonderful theori[es] on classification or scientific nomenclature, for the classificati[on] and scientific names accepted by ornithologists are adopt[ed] without criticism or comment. This is as it should be. The information which the book contains is presented in a somewhat condensed form; the author has evidently been at pains to

eliminate all "padding," to limit the size of the book, and to give as much as possible within those limits: probably some readers might have preferred a more gossipy style, but the book doubtless would have lost in usefulness, even if it had gained somewhat in attractiveness.

One chapter is devoted to "Cages and Aviaries," and a second to "Food and General Management;" the remaining three chapters deal respectively with Waxbills, Grass-finches, and Mannikins. The instruction given in the first two chapters is thoroughly sound and practical: it is evident that Mr. Fillmer writes from an acquaintance of no recent date with his subject, and the budding aviculturist may rest assured that he will not go wrong if he closely follows the advice here given on the general arrangement of a bird-room, the construction of the aviaries, and the methods of heating. We do not, however, share Mr. Fillmer's dislike of the oil-stove, which, in some cases, may be the best heating apparatus available.

In treating of each species, a short description of the plumage and general appearance is given, with the sexual differences: these descriptions are necessarily brief, but are sufficient to enable the beginner to identify all the more common species, and are, in almost every case, very accurate. We, feel bound, however, to take exception to the delicate tints of the Rufous-tailed Grass-finch being summed up as "red and brown," which gives, as we think, a wrong impression of the bird. Mr. Fillmer places this species among the Waxbills on account of its resemblance to the Crimson-finch, but its song is almost exactly like that of the Gouldian-finches: we do not agree with the statement that it is "nearly as quarrelsome as the Crimson-finch."

Like most aviculturists who have kept the species, the author is much enamoured of the Parrot-finch: he remarks that his bird appeared to moult twice a year, which corresponds with our own observations. The legs of the Parrot-finch, by-the-bye, are not black but brown, in some cases light brown.

The best account in the book, as we think, is that of the Bengalese Finch. We quite agree with the author's opinion that it is difficult to distinguish the sexes by the plumage with any degree of certainty. Some very useful and practical hints on the breeding of this species in confinement are given.

Mr. Fillmer considers that the Bengalese is a variety of the Striated Finch, an opinion which we believe will be generally shared by those who have closely observed the two birds.

The little book is got up in a very attractive form: the paper and print are all that can be desired; it will be found a careful and trustworthy guide to the neophyte in aviculture, and a necessary addition to every avicultural library.

This too-favourable review is from the pen of a well-known member of the Council.—Ed.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BLUE AND FAWN WAXBILL.

Sir,—Six years ago there came into my possession (as I thought) a pair of Cordon Bleus. The cock died three days after, but I flattered myself that I had, in the hen, a champion bird, for it was extra large, and had more blue colouring than usual.

A short time after this, I paid a visit to the Zoological Society's Gardens, and was surprised to see in the Parrot house a cage containing what looked like four very fine hen Cordon Bleus, and I remarked to the keeper what a nice sample they were, but that I had a hen quite as large. To my surprise, he said they were quite new (I have quite forgotten the Latin name) that he had been there many years, and the Society had never had any in their possession before.

Not knowing how to designate mine, I call it the Blue and Fawn Waxbill.* It lived peaceably with my Cordons until last year, when they began to nest: then the two cock Cordons nearly killed it. They would get the little fellow at the bottom of the cage and unmercifully fight it. One morning after one of these scrimmages, I caught the poor thing and caged it separately, but it was a most wretched-looking object, very puffy, several feathers gone, and wings drooping. Happening to have the rose trees swarming with *aphides*, I fed the invalid with some of the finest from the point of a camel's-hair brush; and he knew what was prepared for him directly I tapped the tin of insects, and would come to the side of the cage to be fed. For quite a week he moped on the perch, then the turn came, and he began to eat mealworms cut up very small: this was put on to a mixture of crumbled sponge cake and preserved yolk of egg.

I do not recollect seeing any mention made of this bird in the Avicultural Magazine. As it has lived with me nearly as long as some Cordon Bleus, perhaps some members might like to give it a trial. The new introduction is strong and healthy, and has not lost his neck-plume like some of the Waxbill tribe do. The staple food is white, Indian, and spray millet, and he is a regular Oliver Twist for rose grubs and *aphis*, constantly "asking for more."

W. T. Catleugh.

* It is no doubt *Estrilda angolensis*.—Ed.

A NEW METHOD OF DISTINGUISHING SEX.

SIR,—Being interested in the articles in the Magazine referring to the distinction of sexes in birds, and knowing how difficult it is to distinguish some of them, I should like to bring to your notice a method of which I have just heard, and seen tested.

It is as follows:—Take a piece of thread 16in. or 18in. long, and with it thread a needle, and take hold of the ends of the thread between the thumb and finger and let the point of the needle hang over a silver coin, say a half-crown piece; let the point of the needle be about one-eighth of an inch from the coin, then take hold of the bird, pigeon, cat, or other animal or bird with the other hand, and if the animal is a male the needle will swing *across* the coin; but if a female it will go *round* the coin.*

W. OAKEY.

A RARE FOREIGN FINCH.

SIR,—Most aviculturists are familiar with the name, if not with the reality, of the Chingolo Song-Sparrow *(Zonotrichia pileata)*; but probably few, if any, have seen the allied Grey-headed Song-Sparrow *(Z. canicapilla)* in the flesh.

On June 25th a specimen of this rare Patagonian bird was brought to me by Captain Carvosso, a gentleman who, from time to time, has collected many interesting things during his journeys to and from Australia. This bird had flown on board when the ship was a hundred miles to the south of Cape Horn, and he brought it to me to see whether I could tell him where it came from and what it was. I recognized it, at a glance, as a Song-Sparrow nearly allied to *Z. pileata*; but its unstriped crown and pale amber coloured irides struck me at once as very distinct features.

Capt. Carvosso kindly gave me this bird, so that I might have an opportunity of studying it in captivity, but with the proviso that, at its death, it should be added to the National Collection if the authorities cared to accept it. Unhappily, this pretty bird was out of condition although in tolerably perfect plumage. I took it home and turned it into a flight-cage four feet in length, but it would swallow nothing but grit at first (of which it was probably in need), it was far too tame to please me, flew heavily, and only swallowed a few grains of canary-seed before going to roost. I tried to tempt it with mealworms and cockroaches, and when it erected its crest and hopped after one of the latter insects I hoped I might pull it round, but it turned away again and flew heavily up to a perch.

In the morning I found this interesting bird dead, and took it with to the Museum where it will be preserved.

A. G. BUTLER.

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* This is what is, or used to be, called Animal Magnetism. Similar experiments are described in a little known work called "Human Electricity: the means of its development," by J. O. N. Rutter, F.R.A.S., published so long ago as 1854. It would seem that this obscure subject has been little studied of late years.—ED.

CHEAP FOODS FOR INSECTIVOROUS BIRDS.

SIR,—In the February number of the *Avicultural Magazine*, Dr. Butler writes of an Indian insectivorous food for birds, that might prove cheaper than the ordinary ants' cocoons and dried flies, as sold.

Having been in South Africa for some years, it struck me, on reading Dr. Butler's letter, that there was a possibility of collecting and drying the undeveloped locust, in that stage called by Colonials "hoppers."

As the Locust Bird feeds entirely on the developed insect, I should think it very possible that many of the larger insectivorous-feeding birds would take the insect in the smaller or "hopper" stage. Possibly some of our members of the Avicultural Society have tried them.

Having written to a friend of mine at the Cape who takes interest in these matters, asking him to send me some on their next appearance—which has been unpleasantly frequent of late,—I hope to be able to let you know, later on, how my birds take to them. Instead of collecting these pests in handfuls, they might be gathered in sacks: and to turn a plague into a commercial industry would be a pleasing anomally.

CLAUDE VERR[illegible]

BREEDING THE MANY-COLOURED PARRAKEET IN CAPTIVITY.

SIR,—I do not know if this lovely Parrakeet has been bred in any aviary in England, but in several instances it has been, successfully, in France. I have succeeded in breeding it myself this season, and a few notes may interest our readers.

A pair was offered for sale last autumn in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux, and, being desirous of trying my luck with these beautiful birds, I purchased them at a good figure. The gentleman wrote me:—"If you wish to be successful in breeding with them, put them in an aviary alone and give plenty of green food." The latter they have had, but as I could not lodge them alone they have been, since their arrival, in an aviary with at least thirty small birds, from Waxbills up to Saffron Finches and Pekin Robins. They wintered in an outdoor aviary, as most of my birds do, but the aviary has a glass door that can be shut when the weather is very cold or damp. I ought to say though, perhaps, that a small oil-stove was burned in the aviary for about a couple of hours in the mornings of about a dozen of the worse days during the winter, not on account of the Parrakeets, but principally for the small Waxbills, which seemed to feel the winter and looked most uncomfortable. The Many-coloureds, being in the same avi[illegible] had their share of the warmth too; but had they been alone I should have put in the stove, the winter not being a very severe one.

Things went on exceedingly well, and towards the beginning of [illegible] the hen began visiting the nest-boxes, and looked like nesting. The cock was most attentive, and fed her continually. A box was eventually chosen and four white eggs laid, not very large. One of the eggs was broken during incubation; I patched it over with thin gum paper, but it

came to nothing; the other three all hatched and produced two hens and a cock. The two hens I still have in splendid health and plumage, but the young cock died. I attribute the loss to his having been accidentally shut out one chilly night while very young, when he caught cold, and death ensued. They left the nest at a very tender age, before they could walk properly, and days before they could fly. I put them back a time or two, but they were out again soon after and appeared determined to stop out! They were reared without any fuss or extras: the food being spray millet, canary seed, white millet, and a *little* hemp mixed; they had, also, a liberal supply of groundsel, chickweed, and flowering grass, roots with it. A saucer of soft food, for the Finches, is always in the aviary—ants' eggs, a prepared food (bought), and bread-crumbs, mixed, a little boiling milk being poured over the whole, just sufficient to moisten it—and this the parents were very fond of picking over while feeding their young, more on account, I fancy, of the bread and milk than the ants' eggs. I only obtained one nest, rather late, as will be seen—young hatched in June—and the parents are now moulting; but if they could be induced to commence a little earlier, two nests might be obtained during the year. They belong to the same genus—*Psephotus*—as Redrumps, and from a pair of the latter I had three nests last year and three again this.

As regards the character and disposition of the Many-coloureds, with others they have done little harm to the small birds lodged with them—but the aviary is large; in close quarters, as far as my observations go, I do not think they would be "inoffensive creatures towards small birds," as one writer calls them, especially when the breeding-season comes round. In my aviary they seemed very bitter towards a male Saffron-finch, and the cock Many-coloured nearly strangled him one day; yet, strange to say, the pair of Saffrons had nest after nest in a box not eighteen inches away from the Parrakeets. Neighbours do quarrel sometimes! So far, I have had no more trouble with Many-coloureds than with Redrumps; but my success may be attributed to possessing a healthy robust pair—there are "Multicolor et Multicolor, comme il y a fagot et fagot," as the French say. But a good pair, well accommodated, ought to breed with anybody.

Many-coloureds are rather larger than Redrumps, and, as everybody knows, the male bird has a most gorgeous plumage. The hen is much of the hen Redrump plumage, but can be readily distinguished from her by three red patches—one on the head and one on each shoulder. Young hens have the patch on the head as soon as they leave the nest, but those on the shoulders come later: my two young hens have little or no red yet. Young cocks, on leaving the nest, are feathered like the parent bird, the colours being less vivid. The parents are most attentive to their young, and feed them for several weeks after they leave the nest.

I would strongly recommend anybody who attempts breeding these Parrakeets to give a liberal supply of fresh groundsel *daily*, and plenty of flowering grass, roots included, as soon as it can be got in the spring, and continue it fresh *daily* as long as it lasts; they are extremly fond of it, and of groundsel.

My two young hens seem very fond of each other: they preen one another frequently. They are not exactly alike as regards plumage, one is rather lighter than the other; after the first moult they will probably both be like the mother.

Many-coloureds take "forty winks" at different times during the day; but they can be lively enough when inclined to be, and are especially so in the evening as the twilight approaches.

Before closing, let me add a few words about my Parrot Finches. I lost one of the first two young they had, the other—a male, now singing—is coming into adult plumage. I had a second nest last month—four hatched from four eggs; two died very young, and the other two left the nest on the 8th instant. The parents are building again.

I was glad to see Dr. Simpson's remarks in last month's Magazine, and that his observations as regards the marks of distinction of sex corroborate mine. A peculiar thing in young Parrot Finches is that they are hatched with four bluish pearl-like spots, two on each side of the beak, at the base; these spots disappear as they get older, but they have them till they are some six weeks old or more.

A. SAVAGE.

ROUEN.

ALARIO FINCHES.

The pair of birds of this species which last year reared two young have this year hatched three nests, containing altogether seven young, of only two have been reared, and one of these is very weakly. The first nest contained only one young bird, which died when a few days old, and was thrown out of the nest. There were three young in the second nest, all of which lived for about three weeks, when one of them died. The third nest also contained three, all of which died when quite young. The hen is half inclined to nest again—but I shall not permit this. The young are fed on nothing but hempseed and green food—doubtless if the old birds would feed them on egg food they would have a much better chance of rearing them.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

NEW MEMBERS.

The Honble. Mrs. SOMERSET WARD, Isle o' Valla House, Downpatrick, Ireland.

Mrs. LANCASTER, Burnside, Walsall.

The Lady DUNLEATH, Ballywalter Park, Ballywalter, Co. Down.

Mr. EDWIN J. POYSER, Dunburgh House, Geldeston, Beccles.

MEMBERS' SALE AND EXCHANGE COLUMN.

The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 6 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable.*

[illegible]ert Trumpeter Bullfinches: aviary-reared young of this year, 20/- each.
E. G. B. MEADE-WALDO, Stonewall Park, Edenbridge, Kent.

[illegible]y good hen Saffron-finch, has nested in an outdoor aviary this year, 5/-.
Miss ASHFORD, The Birks, Bournemouth.

[illegible]ary-bred hen Australian Crested Dove, 8/-; pair of Peaceful Doves, 9/-. All in perfect health.—Miss M. SHARP, Spring Gardens, Ringwood.

Pair of White-breasted or Pectoral Finches, very fine, 45/-.
Dr. SIMPSON, 2, Portland Road, Hove.

Cock Zosterop Spectacle Bird, very fine and perfect specimen, good singer; also cock Red-head Gould's Finch from outdoor aviary; several small birds for sale.
Miss E. BAMFORD, St. Cuthbert's Leys, Bedford.

Hawfinch with show-cage, nearly through moult, prize-winner last year, 10/-; Linnet, sings beautifully, with Hartz Canary notes as well as his own, 8/-. Miss HOPWOOD, Eastlea, Oxford Road, Worthing.

Green Singing-finch, 4/-, aviary-moulted; cock White-throated Finch, 5/-, pair 6/6, aviary two years; very handsome pair Nicobar Pigeons *(Caenas nicobarica)* aviary-moulted, finest condition, 60/-.
J. B. HOUSDEN, Brooklyn, Cator Road, Sydenham, S.E.

Hen Black-faced Gouldian Finch, imported July, '96, now in outdoor aviary, 10/-; splendid pair Pennant Parrakeets, two winters outside, £2; small Brown Call-drake and two Ducks, 10/-.
B. THOMASSET, West Wickham, Kent.

Three young healthy Rosellas, 9/- each or 24/- the three; cock Barnard, 21/-; young Cockatiels 5/- each, one pair adult ditto 12/6; cock Red-rump 20/-; young Budgerigars 5/- pair. All from garden aviary and in perfect health.
GEO. E. BOUSKILL, The Hollies, Buxton Road, Stockport.

Pennant Parrakeet, perfect plumage and health, gorgeous colour, from outdoor aviary, 22/6; cock Chaffinch, show condition, lovely specimen, 4/6; Magpie, perfect plumage, long tail, '97 hand-reared, 7/6.
W. BUTTON, The Nursery, Corsham, Wilts.

WANTS.

(These are charged for at the same rate as birds for sale).

Healthy male Masked Fire-finch *(Lagonosticta larvata)*.
R. PHILLIPPS, 26, Cromwell Grove, West Kensington Park, W.

No. 4 of the *Avicultural Magazine*, also to exchange a bound copy of Vol. II. for the same in parts as issued.
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CASES FOR BINDING.—See "Notices to Members."

THE

Avicultural Magazine.

BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. III.—No. 36. *All rights reserved.* OCTOBER, 1897.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

Arrangements have been made for the Magazine to be published by Messrs. Betts & Sons, Limited, of 2, Gray's Inn Place, Gray's Inn, W.C., and it will in future be dispatched by them monthly to the members. Orders for extra copies, back numbers, and bound volumes should be addressed to them and not to the Secretary.

All communications (except as above) should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton, and subscriptions should be paid to him. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

All members who intend to resign at the end of the year, are requested to give notice of their intention to the Secretary before the 14th of October, in accordance with Rule 10.

If any members have any suggestions to make for improving the Magazine, or extending the usefulness of the Society in other ways, they are requested to write to the Secretary, who will submit their proposals to the Executive Committee.

A complete list of members, with their addresses, will appear in the November Magazine. In order that this list may be as complete as possible, it is particularly requested that all whose names or addresses have been wrongly spelt in the list of "New Members" will have the kindness to inform the Secretary of the error.

Cases for binding Vol. III. can now be ordered from Messrs. Betts & Sons, Ltd., 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., price 1s. 3d. each. They will be forwarded as soon as ready, post free and carefully packed. A remittance must accompany the order.

NEW MEMBERS.

Mr. GEORGE JENNISON, Devonport Park, Stockport.
Mr. CREIGHTON, Belle Vue Street, Filey.

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION.

Mr. F. W. OATES, White House Farm, Near Leeds.
Proposed by The Rev. C. D. FARRAR.

Mr. J. J. LAWRENCE, Fanciers' Publishing Company, Worcester, Mass., U. S. A.
Proposed by Mr. FILLMER.

Mr. H. GURNEY AGGS, Pittbrook, Dorking.
Mr. FREDK. W. GIBBINS, Neath, S. Wales.
Proposed by Mr. W. B. GIBBINS.

THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

There was no contest for any office, and all the candidates were therefore elected; the result being as follows:—

President—The Hon. and Rev. F. G. DUTTON.

Vice-Presidents—The Right Hon. the Baroness BERKELEY.
Sir H. S. BOYNTON, Bart.

Hon. Secretary—Mr. H. R. FILLMER.

Treasurer—Mr. O. ERNEST CRESSWELL. (*Proposed by* H. R. FILLMER; *Seconded by* C. S. SIMPSON and A. G. BUTLER).

Scrutineer—Mr. V. CASTELLAN. (*Proposed by* R. PHILLIPPS; *Seconded by* A. G. BUTLER).

Auditor—Mr. J. SERGEANT. (*Proposed by* C. S. SIMPSON; *Seconded by* R. PHILLIPPS).

(Continued on page 3 of cover).

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Dec. 6th, 1893.

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Testimonial from H. T. T. CAMPS, Esq., F.Z.S., the Parrot Judge at Crystal Palace.

Haddenham, Isle of Ely, Oct. 17th, 1896.

DEAR SIR,—Just a line to express my satisfaction of the admirable manner in which you have executed the work I have entrusted to you. I observe with pleasure the natural attitude of the birds, which undoubtedly is due to your knowledge of Natural History, an acquaintance of which must be a great acquisition to a Taxidermist.

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EDITED BY

THE HON. SECRETARY,

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL.

VOL. III.

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1897.

ERRATA.

Page 8, line 4, *for* April, 1895, *read* April, 1896.

Page 9, line 16, *for* Gutteral *read* Guttural.

Page 19, 4th line of Mr. Bonhote's reply, *for* Game Meat *read* Game Meal.

Page 102, line 21, *for* Buono *read* Buona.

INSTRUCTIONS TO BINDER.

Pages i. to viii. to follow page 212 and precede Index.

Pine Grosbeak plate to be frontispiece.

Ornamented Lorikeet plate to face page 81.

Blue-winged Green Honeysucker plate to face page 169.

Diamond Dove plate to face page 171.

THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. III.—No. 36. *All rights reserved.* OCTOBER, 1897.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY FOR THE YEAR 1896-7.

We have to congratulate the members of the Society on the ge increase in their numbers during the past year, and hope they will be thereby stimulated to greater zeal in calling the ention of any friends who are interested in aviculture to the dvantage of membership in a Society of such rapidly growing importance and usefulness.

During the past year sixty-three new members have been elected, and the total number on the roll is now two hundred and sixty-one.

We believe that this accession of new members has been largely due to the attraction of the illustrations which have this year appeared in the Magazine—and that, therefore, although the cost of the plates has been heavy, it was money well spent. In spite of the fact that the balance in hand at the beginning of the year has practically vanished, we propose to continue the same policy; and, as was notified in the leaflet issued with the September Magazine, it is intended that at least four plates from drawings by Mr. FROHAWK shall be issued with next year's Magazine. It has been found necessary, however, to raise the extra charge for the hand-coloured plates somewhat considerably.

The competitions for prize articles were not very successful, and only one prize (out of the three offered) was actually awarded. It is not proposed to offer any prizes for competition next year.

No claims have been received for the medals offered to members who should succeed in breeding some species not previously bred in this country; but, as it is believed that several members have come very near to winning one of these medals, the offer is renewed for next year upon the same conditions as before.

We have to lament the death of several members during the past year, that of Mr. ERSKINE ALLON being an especially severe loss to the Society.

Arrangements have been made for Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Limited, of 2, Gray's Inn Place, Gray's Inn, W.C., to undertake the publication and distribution of the Magazine, which will in future be posted to the members by that firm, and to them all orders for extra copies should be addressed.

The thanks of the members are due to all, whether office or not, who in various ways have helped in the work of the Society, and especially to the members of the Executive Committee, whose load of work and responsibility is always a heavy one.

HUBERT D. ASTLEY.	REGINALD PHILLIPPS.
J. LEWIS BONHOTE.	JOHN SERGEANT.
ARTHUR G. BUTLER.	D. SETH-SMITH.
V. CASTELLAN.	C. S. SIMPSON.
L. C. D. LLEWELYN.	WALTER SWAYSLAND.
T. MARSHALL.	AUG. F. WIENER.

MY DOVES IN 1897.

By O. Ernest Cresswell.

Our Secretary has informed me that during these summer ...nths "copy" is always short; this must be my apology for ...lating the doings of the inhabitants of some of my aviaries, which are, I fancy, of interest to but a limited number of the members of our Society.

Through the summer my Doves have been intent, as never before, on raising descendants to represent them in times to come. Pairs, which for years had never really nested, though eggs were casually dropped about, have systematically and seriously made their nests and reared offspring. I cannot entirely account for this: in some cases it is, I think, due to the ...ct that I have learnt by experience just the tempting places in ...ich to hang up nesting-baskets; in one aviary I attribute it to ...e growth of China rose-bushes and honeysuckle, which now ...most conceal the nests; in other cases I cannot pretend to explain the change. A short account of the species which I have this year succeeded in rearing may possibly be of interest.

1. Early in June, through the great kindness of a correspondent in Barbadoes, whom I do not personally know, a large crate arrived, containing seven Wood Doves, as they are commonly called in their native land; ten had been dispatched, three of which had apparently succumbed to the voyage. All were in good health, though one masterful spirit (as I soon learnt) had plucked several bare on the head and shoulders. This Wood Dove is the *Columba aurita* of Shaw's Zoology. It is about the size of the Barbary Turtle, but is shorter in tail and longer in legs, and is decidedly a ground Dove, and runs fast. The general colour of the head, back, and wings, is sienna-brown, changing into vinaceous pink on the breast; on each side of the neck are brilliant violaceous patches which almost meet on the back; there are black and white spots on the wings and on the ends of the tail-feathers, and, on the sides of the head, two dark horizontal lines, like the Zenaida tribe. Temminck's beautiful illustration of his *Columba aurita*, or Martinique Dove, ...most points fairly represents this Dove. In the Natural ...istory Department of the British Museum I was lately courteously allowed to overlook many skins; the nearest approach to my new importations, that I could find, was the S. American *Zenaida aurita*, but its general colour was rather ashen than rich

brown. It is possible that the colour fades after death, or that there is a local difference in birds of the same species.

One hen soon laid on the floor of the large cage into which I put them on arrival, and I reared a pretty active young one under a pair of Barbary Turtles. It was a fascinating little creature, and, to my great regret, fell a victim to a marauding cat. I have this year, for the first time, lost several favourites in the same way. These grimalkins take up their quarters in my woods, and at night, apparently, climb the aviaries and terrify the inmates till they fall exhausted on the ground, and then drag them, or limbs of them, through the wire netting. To any aviculturist, plagued in the same way, I give the hint, that when the netting besides being of small mesh, is also of very strong gauge, and where it does not run to the ground, but the lower part of the flight is boarded, then no such mishaps have taken place. To return to the Doves—I have nowhere seen any either in English or Continental collections. Their coo is very peculiar and musically mournful, utterly unlike that of any other Dove I know.

2. A pair of Crested Marsh Doves of Australia (*Ocyphaps lophotes*), which during five years never nested at all, though the hen continually dropped eggs about, have this year, between the middle of March and the middle of August, nested five times in the same basket. This change I attribute to the growth of shrubs and climbers in the aviary. I had always supplied divers nest-boxes and baskets on shelves or tied to pegs in the inner house, such as I have elsewhere seen these Doves nesting in, but all to no purpose. Last March I one day heard the hen making a peculiar noise in a thick bush of French honeysuckle; I took the hint, fetched a little basket and tied it in the bush to the external wire netting. In an hour she was in it, the next day laid her first egg, and has since ever stuck to it and reared several young ones. These Doves sit about nineteen days, and the precocity of the young is wonderful; one flew from the nest to a high perch on its thirteenth day. In the earlier days of the importation of these Doves, they persisted at Knowsley in breeding in the winter, and indeed, my own, some years ago, began to lay early in February; but by degrees they seem inclined to conform to our English seasons.

3. Then I have a pair of Bronze-necked (*Geopelia humeralis*) now sitting. I have had the cock over six years, several of which he spent with his original mate in a commodious aviary; he made nests and sat on them, but she never laid. I

found that he prevented others from nesting, and even destroyed their nests and eggs, so he had to be removed. Last May I procured a fresh mate for him, but was for some weeks compelled to cage them. I lately turned them alone into a new small ry, bare of shrubs, but with a few natural perches and a ket tied up; within ten days the hen laid, and they are ing well.

4. The nesting which has given me most satisfaction is that of a little pair of the *Zenaïda maculata*. It is a rare Dove, indeed I have never seen any others; and I fancy the smallest of that large tribe. I bought them in 1892 of Mr. Abrahams. They are somewhat larger than the well-known Zebra Dove *(Geopelia striata)*, with rather hooked beaks. Their plumage is dull, save for bright green and violet patches on the sides of the neck; but eir movements are very agile and graceful. They have lived of doors in a large aviary, and I never, before this year, saw signs of nesting, though the hen may have dropped eggs. winter she looked chilly and poorly, so I transferred her to large cage in a bird-house, in which a lot of tender little Doves winter; she soon got perfectly well, and in May was restored to her mate. He showed signs of extraordinary delight, and before long, to my great surprise, I found them sitting on a pair of very round eggs, which were soon cracked by the interference of some troublesome hybrid Doves. The Zanaidas soon laid again, and this time I transferred their eggs to a pair of Barbary Turtles; they hatched one, but apparently they did not like its diminutive size and neglected it. A third time the Zenaidas sat, now in a very secure place; they are the most devoted of parents, drive Doves twice their own size from the neighbourhood of their nest, and have a pair of young nearly ready to leave the nest.

5. Lastly, my Zebra Doves *(Geopelia striata)* have often nested and often raised young to the age of sixteen to twenty days, when they have gone to nest again. The young jump from the nest before they can fly, and, whether from the parents' neglect or from the dampness of our climate, I cannot say, go k in the legs and dwindle away. I expected a similar fate for r this year; as usual, they tumbled down and crawled about ely; one died, but the other gradually gained strength. It s lifted to a ledge every night, and the great heat came on in e nick of time. By degrees wing-power came, and now at the age of towards six weeks it flies with the wonderful strength and agility of the parents, and takes good care of itself.

REVIEW.

British Birds, their Nests and Eggs, Vol. II., by A. G. Butler, Ph.D.

The second volume of this popular work on British b contains the Orioles, Shrikes, Flycatchers, Swallows, Finc Buntings, Starlings, Crows and Larks, and is by the pen of Butler. It abounds (as did the former volume) with interesting anecdotes of the writer's experiences; and if in some cases it should, with more or less truth, be said that such anecdotes 'point to no moral,' yet no one will deny that they 'adorn the tale' and render full of interest what would otherwise tend to be a dry accumulation of facts. For the more serious parts, quotations are freely and judiciously borrowed from many well-known writers, so that the reader is able to find the opinions of many of the leading scientists placed side by side, and to dr therefrom his own conclusions.

The illustrations by Mr. Frohawk are excellent and remarkably good likenesses of the birds, the positions be life-like and the detail good. The coloured plates of the eggs enable one to grasp the general appearance of the egg, but the colouring is in some cases rather wide of the mark.

While writing of the Great Grey Shrike, Dr. Butler gives a quotation from Herr Gätke relating the predatory habits of this species; but in a thickly populated country such as England, remarks tending to cause the destruction of any species are far better unwritten.

In treating of the Swallows, we are regaled with stories of the author's attempts to keep these species in confinement; and it is greatly to be hoped that the publication of these failures will prevent aviculturists from attempting to keep these most delightful of birds in a cage.

In the article on the Linnet, some novel and interesting remarks are to be found with reference to the difference in shape in wing and tail in the sexes. These remarks will not be quite new to the members of the Avicultural Society, as they h been already favoured with a paper on the subject from Butler in the Magazine, and let us hope that he will find t to continue his investigations, and to let us know whether points mentioned with reference to this species hold good other species as well. We are glad to notice that the Doctor has given up handrearing Linnets; the handrearing of such birds is, in our opinion, a practice much to be deprecated: although in

some cases the birds may undoubtedly be tamer, they have rarely the stamina of a wild-caught bird, and but few live to reach maturity.

The House Sparrow is most properly condemned; it is undoubtedly too abundant in this country at the present time, and, being of a very pugnacious disposition, plays no small part in driving away many rarer and more beautiful birds, *e.g.*, the Goldfinch, Linnet, etc. If only the 'killing' instinct of the average British boy could be directed against it, we have no hesitation in saying that the country would be distinctly the gainer, both agriculturally and ornithologically. Dr. Butler's experience of the Tree Sparrow does not coincide with ours; with us it has always been a most delightful and sprightly bird, breeding freely in confinement, though never becoming very tame.

The following sentence relating to the obnoxious habits of [illegible] particular species, is worthy of serious consideration:—'If man would let nature alone he would find the balance perfect, but he interferes everywhere and makes a mess of it.' The whole of nature is, as it were, a large living being, in which each unit has its appointed place in Nature's economy, and not one of these units can be interfered with without the effects being felt far and wide.

The author's remarks on the Jay leave little to be desired, although, perhaps, he has hardly said as much about them as of many other birds. Dr. Butler wonders at the scarcity of its nests; but it is owing, we believe, to that *apparent* scarcity that it is not much rarer. The fact is that this bird, usually so noisy, becomes, during the nesting-season, absolutely quiet unless the nest is actually touched; and it is owing to the absence of the usual cries that keepers imagine that Jays do not nest in their woods, greatly, we are glad to say, to the benefit of the Jay.

We give below a quotation from the article on the Magpie, which is interesting as illustrating a change of habits similar to that of the sheep-eating Parrots of Australia, and worthy of further investigation.

"Although fond of woodland and forest, the Magpie is not strictly confined to them, for it often wanders through well-timbered valleys or even over moorland; whilst in pastures it may not unfrequently be observed upon the backs of feeding cattle, searching for ticks and maggots." Referring to this habit, Lord Lilford observes:—'I am assured by an experienced tenant-farmer in our neighbourhood that he considers this remedy worse than the disease, as the Magpies, in the search for maggots,

acquire a taste for beef, and cause hideous sores which are difficult to treat."

Another interesting passage is also found with reference to the power of vision in a Jackdaw; these anecdotes with their lessons form one of the greatest charms of the book. In this case we cannot quite agree with the author; but that is not to the point, and, were it not for want of space, would like to quote the passage. What we wish to point out is, that these little stories, apart from being interesting to the casual reader, compel him, in spite of himself, to question their accuracy and to experiment on his own account, adding a fresh interest to his private study of birds and, let us hope, not without profit to ornithologists in general.

The question of the Hooded and Black Crows being distinct species or not, is well and clearly discussed and worthy of attention. There are also some interesting and at the same time astounding notes on the migration of the Hooded Crow. Throughout the two articles on these birds nothing but invective is hurled at them. That they do a certain amount of damage cannot be denied, but we strongly deny that the damage is as great as is frequently supposed. To cite one instance: we have found a nest of young Hoodies in a wood in Norway which was at the same time filled with Bramblings, Fieldfares, Redpolls, etc., yet few, if any, of these nests were without their full complement of eggs or young. The balance of nature is so adjusted that it requires no help from man; it is only where man wishes to rear great numbers of Pheasants, or to beautify his woods by lopping the trees, that Crows and Hawks get their food, so to speak, thrown at them, and are then blamed for trying to re-establish the balance which man has upset.

In the article on the Rook there is a pretty quotation in defence of the Crow, looked at from the sentimental point of view. This is another side of the question, which will, we trust, serve to soften the vindictiveness of the preceding articles. No mention is made with regard to the loss of feathers round the base of the bill; as several interesting discussions have been held on the subject, some notice ought to have been taken. The question of the Rooks' service, or reverse, to farmers, is neatly summed up in the following words:—

"In England the Rook is a useful bird as long as it can obtain sufficient quantity of insects and their larvæ to support it and its offspring; but when, owing to protracted drought, it cannot obtain these, it becomes somewhat mischievous after the fashion of its congeners."

In the article on the Wood Lark, Dr. Butler tells a good story of how he was taken in by a birdcatcher; it is evident that he rather enjoyed it, and his good temper over it is instilled into the narrative.

At the end of the volume is an addendum containing notices of species, two of which—*Proregulus viridanus* and *Phylloscopus proregulus*—are genuine stragglers for the first time to our shores. Another example of *Emberiza melanocephala* is mentioned, and also an example of *Phyrrhula major*. We cannot agree with Dr. Butler when he doubts the possibility of distinguishing *P. major* from *P. europæa*; but the foreigner being so extensively kept as a cage-bird can never be recognised as British, however frequently it may occur.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DOVES AT LIBERTY.

SIR,—Any note on so well-known a bird as the common Collared Dove may seem superfluous, but I should like to call attention to the fact that these Doves make charming and most ornamental pets when at liberty in a country garden.

A pair of them, turned out in March, nested repeatedly in a large lime tree, and there are now seven young ones. Two nests were also built in a spruce fir, but were destroyed by a cat.

These Doves have remained very tame, and though strong flyers, they do not roam very far.

B. C. THOMASSET.

BARRABAND'S PARRAKEET.

SIR,—In the Spring of last year, a consignment of *Polytelis barrabandi* reached this country, and as most of them seem to have lived but a short time, perhaps it may be useful to some members to know how I have treated mine, which are now about as fine a pair of birds as one could wish to see.

I obtained what I thought to be a true pair on the 23rd of April last year, and turned them into a large cage, supplying them with boiled maize, hemp- and canary-seed.

The cock, although in very rough plumage, looked healthy and inclined to live; but the "hen," which turned out to be a youthful member of the sterner sex, looked decidedly seedy from the first, and soon died. Its skin, which I still have, is interesting, as it shows the red feathers on the thighs and the rose-colour of the underside of the tail, both of which are characteristic of the adult female; as well as a few yellow feathers on the face and red on the upper breast, indications of the adult male plumage: showing that the plumage of the immature male is identical with that of the adult female.

From an advertisement inserted in the *Avicultural Magazine* I soon obtained another good hen, although somewhat rough in plumage. During the Winter months the pair were kept in a small indoor aviary, together with several small birds, and I found them to be quite amiable towards the latter. They soon came into grand plumage and grew tails to the length of nine or ten inches.

At the beginning of May in the present year they were transferred to a garden aviary, and although there were some cold nights about that time, they did not seem to feel any inconvenience from the low temperature. Log nests were provided, but the Barrabands appeared to take no notice of them and did not attempt to breed.

I feed them on hemp- and canary-seed and boiled maize fresh daily; in addition they get groundsel and plaintain, of which they are exceedingly fond. I never noticed them to touch any of the soft food provided for the other occupants of the aviary: they do not care much for the fruit and will not touch insects.

My experience of this exceedingly beautiful Parrakeet is that when once acclimatised it is perfectly hardy, and does not require and, in fact, will not touch many of the messes which some writers assert to be indispensible to its existence in captivity.

In my pair, the hen is slightly the larger of the two.

D. SETH-SMITH.

THE LONG-TAILED GRASSFINCH AND ITS ALLIES.

SIR,—Mr. Phillipps' experience with *Poephila acuticauda* and *P. personata*, as related in the September number, is curious. I have had both these species this year, and find them both as active and lively as other finches. The masked Finch is the quieter of the two, and quite resembles, in its habits, its very near relation the White-eared Finch (*P. leucotis*); they both build nests in a desultory way, but have never got so far as laying eggs with me; possibly they are neither pairs.

The Long-tailed Finch seems simply the tropical representative of the Parson Finch, their manners and customs are identical.

My birds have built several nests, always viciously driving other birds away from the scene of their operations. I cannot say I expected any result in the way of young, as the old birds never appeared to sit; and I was as much surprised as delighted when I found three healthy youngsters on a bough in the aviary this morning.

The nest is built in a basket made of fine wicker-work in the shape of an egg with a small opening in the centre; hay seems the only material employed, but I have not yet examined the nest carefully; the basket is close to the roof and quite unconcealed. The young birds exactly resemble their parents but are generally paler in colour, though the black patch on the throat is quite distinct, and they have black beaks.

The parents feed their young from the crop.

I should add that I keep these birds in an indoor aviary; coming from a much warmer climate, they are not likely to be as hardy as the Parson Finch.

R. A. TODD.

THE WILD CANARY.

SIR,—Will you kindly answer the following questions regarding the Wild Canary, the progenitor of the domesticated bird.

(1) Is a bird called the St. Helena Canary the true Wild Canary (*Serinus canarius*) ?

(2) Is the Wild Canary found in St. Helena as well as the Canary Islands ?

(3) Is the call-note *exactly similar* to that of the domesticated bird ?

(4) Could it be mistaken for a Citril Finch ?

I have a bird obtained from a dealer, which was said to be a Wild Canary from the Canary Islands, but it seems to be identical with another bird bought by me as a Citril Finch. I have also a pair of birds sold to me as St. Helena Canaries, which are quite different from the above. Could you advise me as to the best way of obtaining a cock bird of the true Wild Canary ? as I am very anxious to hear its song.

C. HARRISON.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Harrison :—

(1) The St. Helena Canary is the Yellow-vented Serin (*Serinus flaventris*) usually known as the St. Helena Seed-eater.

(2) The Wild Canary is not found in St. Helena, but in Madeira, the Canary Islands, and the Azores ; it is very common in Madeira.

(3) The song and call-note of *Serinus canaria* resemble those of the untrained domesticated bird : by "untrained" I mean all excepting Hartz-mountain Rollers : the notes, however, are not quite so strong as those of the typical Norwich Canary.

(4) The Citril Finch being a Siskin (not a Serin) should be readily distinguished by the form of the beak and its more fidgety behaviour ; but of these matters I cannot speak positively, as I have not kept the species ; it is however decidedly larger, the Citril being four and four-fifths inches in total length and the Canary just over four and a half inches. The former is also much greener in colouring on the back, with the shaft-streaks on the feathers less black, and the greater wing-coverts are tipped with yellow, (forming a bar across the wing) whereas in the Canary these feathers have whitish tips : the sides of the body below are moreover streaked with black in the Canary.

Unless you know of somebody likely to visit Madeira, I am afraid I cannot inform you where you can get living examples of the Wild Canary.

A. G. BUTLER.

GREEN CARDINALS.

SIR,—After reading the highly-interesting article of the Rev. C. D. Farrar in the July number of the *Avicultural Magazine*, and of his extraordinary success in breeding not only the Green Cardinals but also a great number of other birds, the fact of my having been fortunate enough to have bred two young Green Cardinals in my bird-room will hardly bear recording.

Like many other owners, I have had eggs from various kinds of foreign birds, but although some Red-headed Finches sat and hatched young ones, still they did not rear them.

The most extraordinary thing about my pair of Green Cardinals is that the hen made a nest in a mustard tinwhich stood on the mantelpiece of room in which they are kept. The hen did not mind my securing the with some heavy pieces of wood, and finally hatched out two young after sitting exactly a fortnight; another fortnight saw them sufficien large to get out of the nest, and great was the excitement of the parent birds when the first one left the parental abode.

As food I gave insects, a few mealworms finely minced, eggs, and—for the last fortnight—they have taken to eating canary and millet seed. After they left the nest the cock bird did most of the feeding, the hen bird taking little notice of them. She has not attempted to nest again.

My bird-room is of considerable height, but not very large nor yet very suitable, as it only gets the sun for three or four hours. I have had the parents for nearly two years, but this is their first attempt in bringing up a family, though I believe the hen laid two or three eggs last year. S did a Virginian Cardinal, but she escaped at the beginning of the spring but I imagine their shyness would prevent their being successful breede

Some years ago a friend of mine had eggs from a Virginian co and a Green Cardinal hen, but somehow they were all broken; but it wo be worthy an attempt, provided a very quiet place could be given, an liberal supply of mealworms.

Might I appeal to the Rev. C. D. Farrar to give a description of his aviary? I am sure it would be a most interesti..g paper to a very great number of subscribers and readers.

Before closing my rather lengthy epistle, I would ask any of the readers if they have known a case of Shâmas breeding and rearing young ones in confinement.*

F. MOERSCHELL.

CARDINALS IN AN OUT-DOOR AVIARY.

SIR,—I have recently received a number of Cardinals from Uruguay, some of the Red-crested species and some of the Black-crested, and am anxious to know whether I can safely winter them in an outdoor aviary, not having room for them indoors. This aviary is rather open, and being near the trees and bushes is apt to be dampish in foggy or rainy weather, which, in the case of Canaries, I have found more harmful than cold. The Cardinals were carefully brought over and are in very fine colour, particularly the Red-crested ones, but seem very wild. Will they have time to get sufficiently seasoned to stand our muggy climate?

H. C. MARTIN.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Martin:

If your aviary is protected against the northerly and easte winds I do not think you need be afraid of wintering your Cardinals out doors; they are far more likely to suffer from fog than from cold; i would certainly have been much better if the birds could have been turned out in the spring.

A. G. BUTLER.

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* The Shâma was bred some years ago by Mr. Phillipps.—ED.

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PRICE SIXPENCE.

THE

Avicultural Magazine.

BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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The Secretary begs to remind members that their annual subscriptions become due on the 1st of November. They will greatly oblige him by remitting the amount (5/-) to him as soon as possible, and thus save him the trouble of making individual applications by letter.

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The Executive Committee greatly regret that the plate representing a pair of Chinese Quails (from a drawing by Mr. FROHAWK), which should have appeared with this number of the Magazine, is not yet ready. It is hoped that it will appear in December.

As has been previously announced, it is intended to issue, this year, a series of at least four hand-coloured plates, similar in style to those which appeared last year. Members who wish for these *coloured* plates will be asked to pay an extra subscription of 5/-, and, as an additional privilege, will have all their Magazines dispatched by letter-post, and protected by a sheet of straw-board. If the funds of the Society permit, additional plates will be issued without further charge. All members who wish for coloured plates are requested to inform the Secretary of their desire at once, and to pay the extra subscription at the same time. This extra subscription must in every case be paid before the 1st of January, 1898. Those members who subscribed for the coloured plates last year, will be assumed to wish to do so again this year, unless they expressly inform the Secretary to the contrary.

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LYON, Lieut-Col. F. L. H., R.A., J.P., Harwood, Horsham. (Nov. 1894).

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PHILLIPPS, Mrs. R., 26, Cromwell Grove, West Kensington Park, London, W. (Orig. Mem.)
PHILLIPPS, Mr. ALEXANDER T. L., Alexandria, Egypt. (Dec., 1894).
PHILLPOTTS, Miss CONSTANCE, 38, Lansdowne Street, Hove. (Feb., 1897).
PIKE, Mr. H. L., St. Clair, Reading. (Feb., 1895).
PITT, Dr. G. NEWTON, 15, Portland Place, W. (Dec., 1894).
PITT, Mrs., The Nest, Torquay. (Dec., 1894).
POOL, Mr. J. C., Carr's Lane, Birmingham. (Orig. Mem.)
POYSER, Mr. EDWIN J., F.Z.S., Dunburgh House, Geldeston, Beccles. (Aug., 1897).
PRINCE, Mr. C., 11, Pollard Lane, Bradford. (Dec., 1894).

RAWTON, Mr. R. J., Brampton House, Longley Road, Tooting. (April, 1897).
REID, Mrs., Funchal, Madeira. (Feb., 1895).
REID, Mr. WILLIAM, 26, Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh. (Dec., 1894).
RENANT, Mr. W. E., The Brambles, Elmbourne Road, Tooting Common, S.W. (April, 1897).
RETTICH, Mr. A., 10, Northanger Road, Streatham Common, S.W. (July, 1895).
RICHARD, Mr. E., Hotel Metropole, Brighton. (Orig. Mem.) *

ROBINSON, Miss H. M., The Newlands, Leamington Spa. (Orig. Mem.)
ROGERS, Miss G. COXWELL, Park Gate, Cheltenham. (Dec., 1895).
ROPER, Dr. E. W., 86, Beckenham Road, Beckenham. (May, 1897).
ROTCH, Mr. CLAUDE D., 3, Beach Lawn, Waterloo, nr. Liverpool. (June, 1897).
ROTHERA, Mr. C. L., B.A., Hazlewood, Forest Grove, Nottingham. (July, 1895).
ROWE, Lady, Downs Hotel, Hassocks. (Dec. 1895).

SALT, Dr. E. G., 50, George Square, Edinburgh. (July, 1895).
SAVAGE, Mr. A., 3, Rue Bihorel, Bihorel, Rouen, Seine Inférieure, France. (April, 1895).
SAVEGE, Dr. GEO., 24, Railway Street, Beverley. (Oct., 1896).
SCRIVENS, Miss, Millfield, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex. (July, 1895).
SEAMAN, Mrs., 30, Elvaston Place, Queen's Gate, S.W. (May, 1897).
SECRETARY, The, Natural History Society, Rugby School, Rugby. (Orig. Mem.)
SERGEANT, Mr. J., 10, London Street, Southport. (Orig. Mem.) *
SETH-SMITH, Mr. DAVID, Wilford House, 22, Shorncliffe Road, Folkesto (Dec. 1894).
SHARP, Miss, M. D., Spring Gardens, Ringwood, Hants. (Orig. Mem.)
SHERBROOKE, Mrs. K., Keldholme Priory, Kirkbymoorside, Yorksh (March, 1897).
SIMPSON, Dr. C. S., 2, Portland Road, Hove. (Orig. Mem.) *
SIMPSON, Miss, 9, Earlham Grove, Wood Green, N. (April, 1895).
SIVEWRIGHT, Miss H. A., The Rise, Headington Hill, Oxford. (Dec., 1895).
SLATER, Mr. ARTHUR A., Windleshaw House, St. Helens. (Nov., 1894).
SMART, Mr. JOHN, 12, Royal Crescent, Edinburgh. (Nov., 1894).
SMITH, Mrs. A. C., Broad Street, Bungay. (Feb., 1896). *
SMITH, Mr. H. B., Grangefield, Park Road South, Birkenhead. (June, 1895). *
SPEED, Mr. CHARLES, Penrhyn Park, Bangor. (Dec., 1894).
STAINES, Mr. E. P., 112, Woodbine Grove, Penge. (May, 1897).
STANSFELD, Mr. JOHN, Dunninald, Montrose, N.B. (Dec., 1896).
STOREY, Mr. J., 7, Blenheim Terrace, St. John's Wood, N.W. (Orig. Mem.) *
ST. QUINTIN, Mr. W. H., Scampston Hall, Rillington, York. (Orig. Mem.)
STURTON-JOHNSON, Miss, Ortava House, Ore, Hastings. (May, 1897).
SWAILES, Mr. GEORGE C., The Nurseries, Beverley, Yorkshire. (June, 1895).
SWAYSLAND, Mr. WALTER, 184, Western Road, Brighton. (Orig. Mem.) *

TATE, Mr. ALAN, 229, Allen Street, Sheffield. (June, 1897).
TAYLOR, Mr. E., 22, Thornton's Arcade, Leeds. (June, 1895). *
THOM, Mr. A. A., Birkacre House, Birkacre, near Chorley. (June, 1895). *
THOMAS, Mr. HENRY, 78, Harlow Terrace, Harrogate. (Jan., 1895).
THOMASSET, Mr. BERNARD C., West Wickham, by Beckenham, Kent. (July, 1896).
THOMPSON, Mr. ARTHUR H., St. Medard's, Darlington. (May, 1895).
THOMPSON, Mrs. WALDEGRAVE, St. Brélade's, Rivercourt Road, Hammersmith, W. (Dec. 1895).
THOYTS, Miss E. E., Sulhamstead Park, Berkshire, (Nov., 1894). *
THURSBY, Mrs., Bank Hall, Burnley. (June, 1895). *
TODD, Mr. R. A., Honeyden, Foots Cray, Kent. (June, 1895).

TOPHAM, Mr. WILLIAM, The Hill, Spondon, Derby. (Feb., 1895). *
TOWNEND, Mr. Frank H., 26, Dornton Road, South Croydon, Surrey. (May, 1895). *
TURNER, Mr. THOMAS, J.P., Cullompton, Devon. (Dec., 1895).

...ALL, Mr. CLAUDE H., Johannesburg, Streatham Common, S.W. (May, 1897).

...D, The Hon. Mrs. SOMESET, Isle o' Valla House, Downpatrick, Ireland. (August, 1897).
WELLS, Mr. H., Colon, Chapel Road, Worthing. (Nov., 1896).
WALKER, Miss H. K. O., Chesham, Bury, Lancashire. (Feb., 1895).
WEBB, Mr. ARTHUR W., 4, Radnor Place, Hyde Park, London, W. (March, 1896).
WHYTEHEAD, Mr. GODFREY Y., 6, Bootham Terrace, York. (April, 1897).
WHYTEHEAD, Mr. T. B., Acombe House, York. (April, 1897).
WIENER, Mr. AUG. F., 2, Upper Bedford Place, Russell Square, W.C. (July, 1896).
...DE, Miss, Little Gaddesden, Berkhampstead. (Dec., 1896).
...KINSON, Miss BEATRICE, End Cliffe, Manor Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. (Dec., 1894).
...LIAMS, Dr. J. D., 93, Newport Road, Cardiff. (Feb., 1897).
...LIAMS, Mr. HOWARD, 4, Highbury Grove, London, N. (April, 1895).
...ILLIAMS, Mrs. LESLIE, 10, Lansdown Crescent, Bath. (Jan., 1895).
WILLIAMSON, Dr. G. C., The Mount, Guildford. (Orig. Mem.)
WINCHILSEA and NOTTINGHAM, The Dowager Countess of, 6, Bedford Square, London, W.C. (May, 1895).
WORDSWORTH, Miss A. M., 149, King Richard's Rd., Leicester. (April, 1895).

YOUNG, Mr. J., 34, Hillfoot Street, Dunoon, N.B. (Aug., 1895).

DECEASED MEMBERS.

1894.

Lady MACDONALD. (Orig. Mem.)

1895.

Mr. H. HOLLOWAY. (July, 1895).

1896.

Mr. ROBERT DASHWOOD. (Orig. Mem.) *
Mr. H. C. GREAME. (June, 1895).
The Honble. MARIQUITA MILLES. (Dec., 1894).

1897.

Mr. HENRY ERSKINE ALLON, M.A. (Feb., 1895).
Mr. WILLIAM THOMPSON. (May, 1897).

RULES OF THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

1.—The name of the Society shall be "THE AVICULTURAL SOCI[illegible] and its object shall be the study of Foreign and British Birds. Pou[illegible] Pigeons and Canaries shall be outside the scope of the Society.

2.—The officers of the Society shall be elected annually by the members in manner hereinafter provided, and shall consist of a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, an Auditor, a Scrutineer, and a Council of twelve members. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be *ex officio* members of the Council.

3.—Each member shall pay an annual subscription of 5/-, to be due and payable in advance on the 1st of November in each year. [illegible] members shall pay an entrance fee of 2/6. Any member whose subscrip[illegible] or entrance fee shall be four months overdue shall cease to be a membe[illegible] the Society, and notice of his having ceased to be a member, and [illegible] cause, shall be inserted in the Magazine.

4.—New members shall be proposed in writing; and the name a[illegible] address of every person thus proposed, with the name of the membe[illegible] proposing him, shall be published in the next issue of the Magazine. Unless the candidate shall, within two weeks after the publication of his name in the Magazine, be objected to by at least two members, he shall be deemed to be duly elected. If five members shall lodge with the Secretary objections to any candidate he shall not be elected, but the signatures to the signed objections must be verified by the Scrutineer. If two or more members (but less than five) shall object to any candidate, the Secretary shall announce in the next number of the Magazine that such objections have been lodged (but shall not disclose the names of the objectors), and shall request the members to vote upon the question of the election of such candidate. Members shall record their votes in sealed letters addressed to the Scrutineer, and a candidate shall not be elected unless two-thirds of the votes recorded be in his favour; nor shall a candidate be elected if five or more votes be recorded against his election.

5.—The Magazine of the Society shall be issued on the first day of every month, and forwarded, post free, to each member. The Secretary shall have an absolute discretion as to what matter shall be published in the Magazine (subject to the control of the Council). The Secretary shall refer all matters of doubt or difficulty to the Council. The decision of the majority of the Council shall be final and conclusive in all matters.

6.—The election of officers shall take place every year betwee[illegible] the 1st and 14th of October. All candidates must be proposed by one mem[illegible]ber and seconded by another member (in writing) before they shall be eligible for election; but this shall not apply to officers willing to stand for re-election to the same office. All such proposals which have been duly seconded must be sent to the Secretary before the 14th of September. The Secretary shall prepare a voting paper containing a list of the candidates, showing the

offices for which they are respectively seeking election or re-election, and shall send a copy of such voting paper to each member of the Society with the October number of the Magazine. Each member shall make a cross (X) opposite the names of those for whom he desires to vote, and shall sign the voting paper at the foot, and send it to the Scrutineer in a sealed envelope, before the 14th of October. The Scrutineer shall prepare a written return of the officers elected, showing the number of the votes recorded for each candidate, and send it to the Secretary before the 21st of October, for publication in the November number of the Magazine. In the event of an equality of votes, the President shall have a casting vote.

7.—It shall be lawful for the Council to delegate any of their powers to a Committee of not less than three.

8.—The Council (but not a Committee of the Council) shall have power to alter and add to the Rules, from time to time, in any manner they may think fit.

9.—The Council shall have power to expel any member from the Society at any time, without assigning any reason.

10.—All members intending to resign their membership at the end of the current year of the Society shall give notice of their intention to the Secretary before the 14th October, and all members who do not so give notice shall continue to be members for the year following, and shall be liable for their subscriptions accordingly.

11.—Neither the office of Scrutineer nor the office of Auditor shall be held for two consecutive years by the same person.

12.—The Scrutineer shall not reveal to any person how any member shall have voted.

13.—If any office shall become vacant at any time, other than at the end of the Society's year, the Council shall have power to nominate any member of the Society to fill the vacancy until the expiration of the then current year.

In consequence of the Audit of the accounts not being y
completed the Balance Sheet for the year 1896-7 is held over til
next month. The balance in hand is believed to be £2 17s. 10d.,
but this amount is subject to correction by the Auditor.

28th October, 1897.

THE

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BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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THE CHINESE QUAIL.

Excalfactoria chinensis, Linn.

By ARTHUR G. BUTLER, Ph.D.

This pretty little species occurs in many parts of India, Burma, Ceylon, China, the Philippines, Malaysia and southwards to Australia: the Rev. G. Brown also obtained it in the islands of the Duke of York group.

It will be unnecessary to give a description of the plumage, the beauty of which has earned it several trivial names: that by which it has long been known to scientists is "the Blue-breasted Quail;" to aviculturists however it is best known by the title employed above.

Respecting the wild life of the species, as observed by him in India, Jerdon says,—"In Lower Bengal it is tolerably abundant in damp grassy meadows, the edges of Indigo fields, and in the grass on road-sides: and in Purneah, in the month of July, it was the only Quail I observed. It breeds in this month, the eggs being pale olive-green. When the young are full grown they disperse all over the country, and this dispersion is greatly assisted, and in many parts, perhaps, caused by the heavy inundations to which a great part of the country in Bengal is annually subjected, generally in August or September."

Speaking of the species in Ceylon (Proc. Zool. Soc., 1872), Mr. E. W. H. Holdsworth says :—"I have seen this bird from Kandy and the cinnamon-gardens at Colombo; and Layard says it is common in the south." Governor Ussher notes it in Borneo (Proc. Zool. Soc., 1879) as tolerably plentiful in open spaces in short thick grass; it is met with up to May or the beginning of June in little bevies; after that I observed them in pairs. They are of rapid flight, and are hard to flush a second time." Dr. Sharpe (loc. cit.) describes the eggs, sent by Mr. Low, as varying from dark olive-brown with few black dots, to pale olive-brown

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where the black dots are more numerous." Mr. Low obtained them in January, 1873, and he states that the native name of the species is "Burong puyu puyu."

Dr. Russ informs us that since 1870, single pairs of the Chinese Quail have been occasionally imported; that it is much sought after for the bird-room, and has on several occasions been bred; that according to Mr. E. Bérin, who indeed was the first to breed it, it is shy and timid, needs a place of retirement, one of which he provided in the form of a straw covering leaning against the back wall of the cage or bird-room. "At the breeding-season the male and female are continually together, the former being gentle and watchful; both build the nest; every disturbance is to be avoided.

From the experience of this and other breeders, Dr. Russ gathers that the laying consists of from four to seven cl brownish, generally dark dotted eggs. Incubation lasts fr sixteen to eighteen days. The nestling-down is yellowish, a the young acquire their full colouring when three months old.

Early in the present year, a good many pairs of this Qu came into the London market, and were offered to the public at prices even lower than those noted by Dr. Russ. Two pairs were offered to me, and I was so delighted with the colouring of these quaint little things that I gladly added them to my collection. My experience has not altogether coincided with that of Mr. Bérin, as I shall now show.

When first introduced into a tolerably large aviary I found the Chinese Quails exceedingly nervous, so that when I entered the aviary they would fly recklessly upwards, striking their heads against the wire netting under the glass roofing and falling heavily to the earth; but no sooner did they perceive that my intentions were never hostile, than they contented themselves with merely running out of my way or leaping in a surprising manner to a raised bank of earth, bounded in front by a wall nearly two feet high from the sanded floor.

At one end of the bank above noted, I provided a place of retirement by sticking a row of fir-twigs into the earth about six inches from the back wall: behind this partial screen the Quails often sat down during the day-time, sometimes scratching a shallow depression in the soil and dragging in a little hay and a few feathers; but at other times they settled down all together in an open corner of the aviary upon the sand, and at night they frequently went to roost in another open corner upon a cemented wall.

At the present time my Quails are quite tame and confiding, wandering about like young chicken, running to seize cockroaches or spiders when thrown into the aviary, and clambering into a demon beetle-trap to pick out the insects if it is placed upon the floor. They now never fly, but often stretch their bodies and flap their wings.

The note of these birds is very faint and I am never quite sure, when I hear it, that it is not a muttered observation of some other of my feathered family; but, on one occasion—and only one—whilst watching one of the cock birds, I saw him stretch himself and utter the tiniest and most ridiculous little crow conceivable. *

On several occasions, when hay and feathers have been dragged together and roughly moulded into a vague kind of saucer, I have hoped that my Quails were preparing to breed, but no eggs have ever been produced.

Although I have never seen the slightest approach towards quarrelling on the part of my two pairs, one circumstance has rather annoyed me. A hen of one of the pairs, when first purchased had the crown of the head quite bare, and the other birds seem to regard it as a solemn duty not to permit this unfortunate lady ever to retain a covering upon her head; indeed they recently denuded her of feathers down to the back of her neck.†

THE SMALLER WARBLERS AS AVIARY BIRDS.

By Septimus Perkins.

Among the many avicultural experiences upon which I can look back with pleasure and satisfaction there are a few which I can now only recall with feelings of regret and disappointment. Among these last unfortunate episodes is my attempt (made many years ago) to keep some of our tiny British Warblers in my aviary. In our Magazine we have frequent records of success; perhaps, for a change, some readers will bear, for once in a while, with a tale of failure.

I had seen a beautiful specimen of the Willow Wren at a Bird Show, and I was fired with the ambition to possess one like it, and eventually, in spite of warnings from more experienced friends, I made up my mind to "go in" for the smaller Warblers. It was the autumn, when such birds are obtainable, and I got

* The usual note is a feeble twittering, usually described as peeping. Since writing the above I have again heard the bird crow three times in succession.—A. G. B.

† One of my two hens was killed by the other in this manner.—R. P.

together, from various sources, two or three Willow Wrens, a Chiff-chaff, and a couple of Sedge Warblers—one of these last being sold to me as a Reed Warbler (a common mistake, by the way).

Some of these little birds seemed in poor condition when I received them, while others were, apparently, quite healthy, but I hoped that they would all improve under my care. They took kindly to the food provided, which was, I still think, the best I could give them, viz., soaked ants' eggs, hard boiled egg, and grated carrot, mixed together with a few bread crumbs; milk sop; and a liberal supply of mealworms. But instead of improving they went from bad to worse; one or two died suddenly, falling from the perch in a fit; but most of them went into what seemed like a rapid decline, becoming quickly weaker until they died. I think the last of them did not survive more than about two months after I bought him. The Sedge Warblers were certainly hardier than the others.

While they lived, they were the most charming little creatures imaginable, delightfully tame, and, in their eagerness for mealworms, bewitchingly comic. But then, the pity of it, they so soon died!

I really think I did my level best for these little birds; they had the most nourishing food and a comfortable aviary, and I fail to see that anything more which I could have done would have prolonged their lives. And yet, in spite of every attention, they were all dead and buried in much less than three months.

Whether my birds were wild-caught or hand-reared I do not know; or, if wild-caught, how they were meated off. A very clever and experienced dealer has told me that he could never succeed in meating off Willow Wrens, and he did not know how it was done.

Well, no more of the "Smaller Warblers" for me. I made my experiment, and it failed, and I think I am justified in concluding that these charming, aerial little creatures are quite unsuited for captivity—unsuited, however, not by their mere fragility, but from their natural diet being such as it is impossible to satisfactorily replace. They live on tiny living insects, and nothing else will for long sustain their delicate bodies in health. Possibly, some day, a substitute may be discovered; but, at present, we seek it in vain.

I will conclude with a warning. To those who are thinking of trying to keep any of the smaller Warblers, my advice is,

—"don't"—firstly, because it is cruel; secondly, because it is useless.

I think that the Garden Warbler might be kept with about as much success as the Blackcap and the White-throat. All these will eat fruit largely, and being, therefore, less exclusively insectivorous, are much easier to fend for.

FURTHER NOTES ON MY BIRDS.

By R. A. Todd.

Among all the positive statements that have been made by aviculturists at various times, there does not seem to be one to which time or circumstance does not, sooner or later, find an exception. There is, perhaps, no fact more generally accepted as beyond doubt than that of the extreme pugnacity of the Australian Fire Finch (*Neochmia phaëton*). I can, however, produce an exception to even this rule. I bought four cocks in October, 1896: one was *in articulo mortis* and died next day; two others proved the rule of the delicacy of the species when newly-imported, by succumbing within the month. The survivor has never had a day's illness; and, what is most extraordinary, has proved the most peaceable of birds. He lives in an aviary with about thirty companions, consisting of Gouldians, Silverbills, Singing Finches, Nuns, etc., with which he is on the best of terms. We are generally told that this species is fond of mealworms, and Dr. Russ mentions giving them the incredible number of twenty-five in a day; but my bird will hardly look at a mealworm, and possibly the absence of animal food may account for his unusually peaceable disposition, though in other respects he is extremely lively and sings constantly. He is most anxious to nest and is always carrying bits of hay about, but unfortunately I have never been able to provide him with a wife.

A handsome and rather engaging bird is the Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca cærulea*), but one about which the general run of avicultural works are silent. Mr. Erskine Allon always said that he found it short lived, dying within a few months or even weeks, from no apparent cause. My first specimen came into my possession on the 26th May, 1896, and a second in September of the same year; the latter was in poor condition. These two birds were never on very good terms and the weaker succumbed in the following January. In May I turned out the survivor into

an open air aviary (together with a female), but he was killed, I think by a cock Indigo or Diuca, both of which at once showed hostility to him though they never molested the female, who is still living. I am inclined to think that an open air aviary is the suitable place for this bird, and that it will not thrive in a warm and close room. I feel pretty certain that it is an egg-stealer and should not keep it with smaller birds that are wanted to breed. Canary-seed is its staple article of diet, and some hemp; mealworms it will eat to any extent, also egg-food and ants' eggs, and it has a decided relish for green food. I have lately got another male, but in poor condition, which seems generally the case with these birds when first imported, though they soon come round.

I find the Magpie Mannikin a most provoking bird in the matter of breeding. My pair built a beautifully-constructed nest of aloe-fibre in January. No young appearing after a considerable interval, I made an exception to my invariable rule of giving a wide berth to breeding birds, and examined the nest, which I found half full of eggs. This nest was eventually pulled to pieces and another built, which was almost immediately destroyed, and another is now in process of construction, built, as were the others, among some twigs of box. I should have suspected that both my birds were females, but they are decidedly different and came to me from Mr. Abrahams, who I have never known to fail in distinguishing sex. These birds also have a reputation for pugnacity, but I have not known them to do any harm when associated with others of their own size; I have never tried them with Waxbills or other small species. They are very fond of mealworms.

I consider myself fortunate in being the possessor of a pair of Jacarinis (*Volatinia jacarini*). The hen seems to be a very rare bird in this country; in colour she somewhat resembles the hen Indigo Finch, though of course of a very different build. These are rather shy birds, spending most of their time among any bushes or cover there may be in the aviary, but when moving about have very much the nervous habit of the Waxbills: their tails seem never at rest. My birds have never nested, and from their nervous disposition I should doubt their ever bringing off a brood, though the Buntings seem generally steady sitters, if these are Buntings, as Dr. Bowdler Sharpe suspects. They are certainly fond of insects and always ready for a mealworm or earwig; as regards seed, they seem to prefer canary and Indian millet, and delight in chickweed.

Of all the Waxbills the most delightful is probably Dufresne's Waxbill (*Coccopygia dufresnii*), but unfortunately I cannot endorse the opinion that seems generally held of the robustness of its constitution. I have had five individuals this year, three cocks and two hens, and have now only one, a cock, remaining. They were all in perfect health when I received them, but dropped off one after the other without any previous sign of illness, after living with me for about two months. In the same aviary I have kept two pairs of African Fire Finches for over a year in perfect health, not to mention Cordon Bleus for longer, so the conditions would seem quite favourable for delicate species.

Another bird that seems difficult to keep is the Lined Finch: it always appears moping and out of health, and never lives long. Its nails grow at a rate that I have never seen equalled in any other bird and require cutting almost weekly, a very troublesome peculiarity in an aviary-kept bird. The Mesquital Finch I have found equally short lived (though I doubt if I have ever had a thoroughly healthy individual); a great contrast to its congener, the White-throated Finch, which nothing seems to affect. This latter I had hopes of breeding this year; a small open cup-shaped nest was built very neatly with bents in a branch of box, but no eggs were ever laid. The Reddish Finch seems also fairly robust, though delicate when newly-imported.

I think Mr. Fillmer rather maligns the Rufous-tailed Finch. I have had a pair for nearly two years and, though kept with the smaller Waxbills, have found them perfectly peaceable. The hen is a very ready layer, but always dispenses with the formality of a nest, preferring to deposit her eggs on the open floor of the aviary; she is apt to get egg-bound in the winter, but this trouble invariably yields to the application of heat.

I have had a pair of Three-coloured Parrot Finches (*Erythrura trichroa*) for some months. They are rather timid and placid birds, but occasionally indulge in a very rapid flight round their aviary. I believe all the individuals now in Europe are the descendants of a very small importation that reached Germany some years ago; it would appear, therefore, that they are not difficult to breed, but my pair has shown no sign of doing so yet. They are certainly not so brilliant as the commoner Parrot Finch, but the combination of subdued green, blue and red is distinctly pleasing. I have not kept the two species together and cannot say how they would agree; the

former species is perfectly inoffensive with other birds. The hen differs from the cock only in her slightly duller coloration. I have never known this bird eat mealworms, of which the Parrot Finch is very fond.

In May I received from Mr. Frostick a pair of White-crowned Larks from Loanda; though rare, I can hardly recommend them as interesting. They are purely ground birds, but now and again rise two or three feet into the air with a feeble fluttering flight. They become very tame, but are too feeble to compete with birds of stronger will for mealworms, which are their favourite article of diet; they thrive well on the usual seeds together with egg-food and ants' eggs. The cock has rather a comic expression of self-importance and seriousness, and is withal a handsome bird in his quiet dress of black and white, the hen being more soberly attired in sandy buff.

One word of warning on the question of nesting materia I was tempted to supply my birds with aloe-fibre; they certainl highly appreciate it (especially Aurora Finches and Magp Mannikins), but a bird once entangled in it is practically los unless quickly noticed; and several severe losses have induced me to abandon it. I now chiefly use hay, and this with asparagus sprays, moss, and cotton wool seems to meet every requirement, and such material is perfectly safe. Weavers are quite content with rather long fresh grass.

It seems generally held by aviculturists that a conservatory is an unsuitable building wherein to place an aviary, on account of the necessarily wide range of temperature it is subject to. I confess I fail to see the force of the reason given. In most climates of the world (though with some notable exceptions) there is a very considerable difference between the day and the night temperature, and this is markedly the case in South Africa, whence we get so many Finches. This fact is recognised by gardeners, who carefully maintain this variation in the temperature of their glass-houses. Why should birds require different treatment from plants in this respect? If in their native climate birds endure a lower temperature at night than during the day, surely the same conditions will suit them in confinement. Of course the effect of a hot sun shining through glass is decidedly distressing to birds if they a unable to find shelter from the rays, but this is easily arranged by the use of an outside blind or a light wash on the glass, and also by the provision of sheltered nooks in the aviary. I believe other members of the Society have their aviaries under glass,

and it would be interesting to know their experience. The main point is the provision of ample ventilation, and this is probably easier to arrange in a properly constructed glass-house than in a room. I should mention that I do not keep any plants in the same structure with my birds; but again, I do not see why the moderately moist atmosphere that the former require (coupled with free ventilation) should be inimical to the health of the latter; in fact, so high an authority as Dr. Russ recommends that living plants should be kept in the bird-room for the sake of the beneficial effects they have on the health of birds.

THE GOLDFINCH.

By J. Lewis Bonhote.

Of the several species of birds commonly kept in confinement there is no more universal favourite than the Goldfinch. It is the most brilliant in plumage of our commoner British birds; its ways and habits in a cage, where it may be taught many little tricks, are pleasing and confiding; while its song, though hardly equal to that of the Linnet, is none the less bright and cheerful. The plumage of the Goldfinch is too well known to need any description. The female may be readily distinguished from the male by her duller tints and brown shoulders. The young, popularly known as "Greypates," resemble the adults, except that the head is of a uniform greyish brown.

There are several varieties of this finch, which are met with in a wild state, and breed true. The best known of these is the "Cheverel," in which the chin is white, the white extending upwards through the black band across the occiput. This variety is supposed (with what truth I cannot say) to have a finer song. Another variety is that known as the Pea-throat, in which the white on the throat, instead of entirely replacing the red, leaves a small patch the size of a pea. Besides these two well marked varieties, birds are found in every intermediate stage, and these are known in bird-catchers' parlance as "bastard cheverels." The usual other varieties occur, such as albinism and melanism; but these changes are often only confined to the head. Lastly, this bird is credited by the ignorant with many varieties which have no existence, such as Pear Tree, Fir, Wood, etc. I have several times tried to master the supposed differences between these varieties, but whenever I have brought a bird-catcher to book, he has said he could not explain,

but would show me on a bird; and when the bird was forthcoming it was never typical of any particular kind!

Our Goldfinch has a very wide distribution, reaching eastwards to Siberia and Persia, and southwards to the northern shores of Africa. In Siberia it is replaced by another species, *C. caniceps* (having no black on crown or nape), with which it freely interbreeds, and specimens are found in all stages intermediate between the two, as may be seen in some specimens brought from the Yenesei by Seebohm, and now in the entrance hall of the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. The foreign Goldfinches, which are imported in great numbers into this country every year, belong to a large eastern Asiatic race known as *C. major*, and come from the south-west portions of Siberia.

The Goldfinch breeds chiefly in orchards and gardens, generally high up on the tree. The nest, which is cup-shaped, is composed of moss, bents, and a few roots, very neatly and compactly woven together and lined with hair, willow down, and a few small feathers. It is very conservative as to locality, breeding every year in the same orchard and sometimes on the top of its former nest. The eggs are light blue, with a few streaks of dark brown or purple, chiefly at the larger end. The young are fed on semi-digested food from the crop, although it has frequently been asserted that caterpillars are their diet.

It is as a cage bird, however, that it is of chief interest to us, and it is, perhaps, the most widely kept of all cage birds. Some like it for its song; others for its beauty and enticing ways; others, again, because of the facility with which it may be made to breed with the Canary, the progeny, if not beautiful, being prized for the richness of its song.

Hybrids are also produced—though only by experts—with the Bullfinch, this cross being one of the most beautiful of birds. Never having possessed one, however, I am unable to speak of the quality of its song. It may also be taught various tricks, such as drawing up water and opening the box containing its food; but such performances are most unnatural, and certainly not conducive to the birds longevity or enjoyment. They are, therefore, greatly to be deprecated.

In the Fourth Edition of Yarrell, a quotation is given from Syme, who writes about a number of trained Finches, which he had seen exhibited by a certain Sieur Roman:—"One seemed dead, and was held up by the tail or claw without exhibiting any sign of life; a second stood on its head with its claws in the air;

a third imitated a Dutch milkman going to market with pails on its shoulders; a fourth mimicked a Venetian girl looking out of a window; a fifth appeared as a soldier and mounted guard as a sentinel; a sixth acted as cannoneer, and, with cap on head, fire-lock on shoulder, and match in claw, discharged a small cannon. The same bird also feigned to have been wounded, and was wheeled in a barrow, to convey it, as it were, to the hospital, after which it flew away before the company. A seventh turned a kind of windmill, and the last stood in the midst of some fire-works, which were discharged all round it, without exhibiting the least symptom of fear." In captivity this bird lives for a long time on the ordinary mixed seeds, but a small amount of hemp daily is a necessity, and, if possible, it should always have access to some "soft food." When wild it is frequently met with in flocks on waste ground where thistles abound, and such food would, doubtless, be both acceptable and beneficial in confinement.

About such a general favourite many fables and stories naturally arise. The following we found when glancing through a popular work on British Birds, now somewhat out of date:— It appears that a pair of these birds built their nest on a very slender branch, and in due course the eggs were hatched. The young soon began to get too heavy, and the slender branch was gradually giving way under their weight till the nestlings came into imminent danger of being thrown out. When matters had reached this dangerous stage, the birds were observed to take one end of a piece of string, which had been used among the nesting materials, and tie it round a stronger neighbouring branch, thus saving their offspring. Another story tells how a certain lady had a Goldfinch that never saw her go out without making every effort in his power to quit his cage and follow her. On her return she would be welcomed with every mark of extreme delight, and as soon as she approached a thousand little actions showed his pleasure and satisfaction. If she presented her finger, he would caress it for a long time, uttering a low, joyous murmur. This attachment was so exclusive that if his mistress substituted another person's finger for her own he would peck it sharply, whilst one of his mistress', placed between two of a stranger's, would be at once recognised and caressed accordingly.

The belief in the strong feelings of attachment of this species is widespread, and we will conclude this article by quoting a few lines from Cowper on the subject.

The poet, after relating how two Goldfinches lived together in a cage, and how one of them succeeded in escaping, continues thus :—

"The open windows seemed to invite
The freeman to a farewell flight ;
But Tom was still confined.
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too generous and sincere
To leave his mate behind.

"So settling on his cage, by play,
By chirp and kiss, he seemed to say
'You must not live alone.'
Nor would he quit that chosen stand
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
Removed him to his own."

THE GREY JAVA SPARROW.

(Munia oryzivora).

By Wesley T. Page.

This common bird scarcely needs description. It is about five inches long—body three inches, tail two inches—heavily built almost to clumsiness, and yet graceful and sprightly in its movements.

The beak is thick and heavy and of a bright rose colour, shading almost to white at the tip. The head, rump, tail, and larger wing feathers are black, cheeks white and very sharply outlined, the other parts of the plumage being lighter or darker purplish grey, legs and feet, flesh colour.

In good condition it is tightly and compactly feathered, so much so that it is difficult to individualise the feathers, but the plumage appears one level, smooth garment, covered with a bloom, similar to that seen on ripe grapes and plums, and this, in spite of sharp contrasts, gives it quite a taking and masher-like appearance.

Sexes are exactly alike in plumage, but the hen is generally a little smaller, flatter on the crown, and, when closely observed, particularly from the side, her beak is narrower and more pointed.

Java Sparrows are found in Java, Japan, China, and Southern India, where they commit great havoc in the rice fields, rice being their principal food in a state of nature; in confinement millet and canary seed will be sufficient, with a little soft

food when there are young in the nest, though some pairs will bring up their young on seed alone. Some aviculturists assert paddy rice to be essential, but I have never found it so, and it is certainly rather expensive and difficult to obtain; and, if fed as indicated above, they will remain in the best of health and bring up brood after brood (green food and grit, of course, being supplied in addition). I would recommend that aviary-bred birds be procured (though they are double the price of imported ones), as the wild-caught birds do not nest readily in captivity. And though there are exceptions which do so, these generally choose the winter (and then, out of doors, the young are seldom reared), and usually only after being a year or two in their quarters, while aviary-bred birds nest as readily as Canaries—even more so, for they are excellent feeders. Out of doors they will usually rear three broods in the season, but in an indoor aviary, slightly heated, I should say they would go on breeding all the year round, only stopping for the moult; but I have only kept them out of doors.

Nesting accommodation: They like a box, closed on all sides, with a hole for entrance, or a cocoanut husk—mine always choose the box. I generally get a dry soap powder box, which is about eighteen inches by nine inches, and six inches deep, with a wire-hinged lid; insert two partitions; tack down the lid; cut in it three holes; fix a perch in front of each; and I then have three nests for about a penny, in which, according to my experience, the birds will nest side by side, and not interfere one with the other, save in defending their own apartment and the perch in front of it. Fine hay is all they require for nesting material.

The period of nidification I cannot give with certainty, as it is so difficult to tell when they begin sitting, but I believe it to be thirteen or fourteen days; the young usually fly at about four weeks; and are well able to feed themselves at six weeks, though they importune the old birds for food, till at last they lose patience and drive them off.

They must not be meddled with: inquisitiveness—laudable though it be—is incompatible with the successful breeding of foreign birds, or British either, with very few exceptions. I have constructed my small garden aviary with small doors and flaps, so that I can refill the hoppers, change the water, and scrape out the floor all from the outside, only having to go inside once a year for the renewal of perches, etc. I have always found Java Sparrows to be quite harmless, though they will not let

other birds come near their nest perch, and my aviary is rather crowded with a mixed collection of British and foreign finches. Several pairs will agree and breed together, even with other species, providing there are at least twice as many nests as pairs of birds.

They are hardy in the extreme, safely coming through the roughest winter weather. I have found mine on sharp frosty nights roosting in the open uncovered portion of the aviary, and in the very pink of condition next day. The bath should be given in all weathers, and they will keep themselves in perfect trim, and thrive on the roughest treatment, though, like all other species, they repay, to the full, careful and thoughtful attention.

When Mr. Java is making love to his mate, he is most entertaining and amusing, going through a most grotesque performance of jumping, bowing, scraping, and twirling in the effort to shew himself off to the best advantage. Let me put a plea for aviaries here. Birds never do themselves justice even in the largest cage, and they give an ample return for the cost of erecting aviaries in the pleasure they afford and the happiness of their demeanour when kept under almost natural conditions. I am in favour of garden aviaries constructed similarly to an ordinary fowl run, viz., with shed, shelter open at front, and run open top and front, wired with half-inch netting; and I am convinced that many species that will not live indoors without a little heat, in such an aviary, if turned out in June, will survive our severest winters.

Java Sparrows readily become tame, and with their bright appearance, perfect trim, and entertaining ways, a beginner could not do better than invest in a pair or two, provided he procures aviary-bred ones. As I said before, these are the cheapest and best in the end, even at three times the cost of the imported ones.

SERIN FINCHES BREEDING IN CONFINEMENT.

By G. C. Swailes.

A pair of Serin Finches *(Serinus serinus)* have this season nested successfully in my aviary. The nest, an exceedingly small structure, much smaller than a Redpoll's, was completed by about the 3rd of May; four eggs were laid; and three young ones left the nest on the 31st of May. They were fed chiefly on the seed of the dwarf grass, and on leaving the nest were soon able to look after themselves. The old birds nested again at once; but I had carelessly allowed a lot of Long-tailedfield mice

to establish themselves round the aviary, and these destroyed the eggs. A third nest of eggs was, unfortunately, wasted by some young Goldfinches and Greenfinches which had been bred also. During the time the hen Serin was sitting and the young being fed, the cock spent the whole of his time in fighting, chiefly with a cock Goldfinch. At other times the quietest and most peaceable bird alive, he now was a regular nuisance—he fought till he had no feathers on head or breast, and looked a thorough wreck. The young, on leaving the nest, were brown—a good deal like Redpolls; but have now acquired the yellow markings of adult birds, though not quite so bright.

On the 26th May I was both surprised and pleased to see a wild male Serin pay them a visit. It stayed about the aviary most of the morning, having a wash in a brook which runs close by. I heard it singing in some tall oaks in the afternoon, after which I saw it no more. I imagine this species visits Britain more often than is supposed, for it would probably not be noticed by anyone unacquainted with its song.

AVICULTURAL SMALL-TALK.

We are afraid that most of the members never read the "Notices to Members" which appear inside the cover of the Magazine. Much of the matter printed there is of a formal character, and is reproduced month after month without alteration, but almost every month there is some special notice which members would do well to read.

It is very unfortunate that the plate to accompany Dr. Butler's article on the Chinese Quail, and which is intended to form the frontispiece to our fourth volume, is not ready, and has to be held over till next month. The hand-colouring process is a lengthy one, and cannot be hurried. The Secretary will do all in his power to secure the punctual appearance of the other plates, but it is more than probable that some of these will be delayed also.

While on the subject of plates, we may as well remind members that those who want hand-coloured copies should give notice to the Secretary at once. And it would save time and trouble if they would at the same time send the special subscription of 5/- for the colouring. This will in every case be expected to be paid before the 1st of January. Those members who subscribed for the coloured plates last year will be assumed to wish for them this year unless they intimate the contrary.

It is a rather remarkable thing that none of our smaller British birds of the soft-food sort take very kindly to captivity, while many little soft-billed foreign birds are hardy and long-lived in the aviary. The difference

is probably due to the fact that the Britishers are mainly insectivorous, while the foreigners subsist chiefly on fruit. Strictly insectivorous birds are hard to cater for, but fruit-eating birds, on the contrary, are scarcely more trouble than seed-eaters. Also, fruit-eaters can be supplied with their natural food in its natural form, while insect-eaters have to be fed chiefly on artificial substitutes for the live insects which are their proper diet. Honey-eaters, again, are fairly easy birds to provide for, as honey can be given in its natural state, and milk-sop forms an admirable substitute for it.

There was some discussion recently in the *Feathered World* as to the number of birds which an aviary of a given size would contain, and as to how the capacity was to be reckoned. The better opinion seemed to be that the ground area of the aviary was the most important element in the calculation, and mere height a secondary matter. This is, no doubt, correct. An aviary ten feet high will comfortably accommodate very few more birds than one half that height, although it will give the inmates more room for exercise. As Mr. Fulljames pointed out, it is an excellent plan to build bird-room aviaries in two tiers, one above the other. If the room be ten feet high, five feet can be allowed for each aviary, which is generally ample. The upper aviaries can be used for breeding, while the lower ones are occupied by birds kept only for show. The upper aviaries are even more secluded than those which go from floor to ceiling, while in the lower ones the birds are kept better under observation. But if the room be much less than ten feet in pitch the lower aviary is apt to seem wanting in height, and the plan does not answer so well.

At the last Palace Show the specimen of the Blue Sugar-bird (*Dacnis cayana*) exhibited by Mr. Fulljames aroused much interest, and it was stated, we believe correctly, that it was the first female of the species ever imported alive. This autumn a few more have arrived, all, like Mr. Fulljames's bird, females. For the information of those who have not seen it, we may mention that the hen is slightly smaller than a Goldfinch, the general colour being a rather dark metallic green, with pale greenish blue head and ashy throat. The legs and beak are dark, and the latter is not curved. The male is described as being a lovely blue and black bird. It is strange that the female alone should be imported. This bird, and the Yellow-winged Sugar-bird (*Cæreba cyanea*), in spite of their apparent fragility, seem well adapted for captivity, being very tame and living well on a diet of milk-sop, fruit, and honey. They seem much hardier and easier to keep in condition than Tanagers, and are certainly more attractive on account of their more confiding disposition and more graceful movements.

The Committee of the L. & P. O. have provided at their approaching Show a class for Mannikins, Waxbills, and Combasous; one for Weavers and Whydahs (except Combasous); and another for "any other variety of Seed-eating bird." The result of this frankly unscientific classification is that Grass-finches are grouped with Finches, Grosbeaks, and Buntings, and the judge has to take upon himself to decide which species are to be considered Grass-finches and which Mannikins or Waxbills—not always an easy matter. Would it not be better either to name in the schedule every doubtful species likely to be shown, or to refer to some recognised list?

A gentleman at Brighton has a common Barbary Dove which has lived in his possession for 23 years, and was adult when he first had it. It is in good plumage, but somewhat infirm. This old Dove is a confirmed bachelor, having always refused to have anything to say to the hens at different times introduced to him.

The following pigeon story is vouched for by the Premier of New Zealand. Mr. Seddon's family received from relatives in Victoria a beautiful pair of Antwerp homing pigeons. One day the birds were out flying, but only one returned to the cot, and nothing more was heard of the other; but some time after news was received from Victoria that the missing bird had arrived safely at its former home. To reach Victoria from New Zealand the bird must have accomplished the feat of flying something like 1,000 miles without rest, and according to the dates it must have done the journey in less than three days, which would mean that it would have to fly at a speed of from 18 to 20 miles an hour continuously.

We have always refrained from advocating the use of any special ...e of aviary appliance or bird food, as we considered that to do so would ...nfair to other makers. But we feel that we may properly make an ...ception in favour of Jones's Hygienic Fountains. These fountains are ...tirely unlike any others that we have ever seen, and are infinitely ...uperior to the old-fashioned pattern. They, and none others, ought to be used in every bird room. It is true that they are rather more expensive than the ordinary fountain, but then they are much more durable, so that they cost no more in the end. They are so constructed that the water cannot very well be fouled by the birds; they can be easily and quickly filled; and *the inside can be thoroughly cleaned.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE GENUS *BROTOGERYS.*

SIR,—I should feel obliged to any member of the Avicultural Society who can give me any general information about the genus *Brotogerys* and as to their desirability as pets. The Orange-flanked Parrakeet, which I have had, was a most fascinating bird, as tame as possible from the moment I bought him. I am desirous to know if the other members of this genus are as attractive as *B. pyrrhopterus.*

CLAUDE D. ROTCH.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Rotch :—

I have kept members of the *Brotogerys* genus for several years, and ...ery fond of them; but I find that individuals of the same species vary ...eatly according to the treatment they have been subjected to before being received. They are constitutionally very timid birds, and are ofttimes so roughly treated before coming into one's hands that they do not readily recover sufficient nerve to become tame: they are terror-stricken.

The Orange-flanked Parrakeet, when kept in a cage, is quite one of the tamer species; my pair, however, loose in the bird-room and aviary, became very strong, and then lost much of their tameness; they never followed me about, nor came up to have a chat, as some of the others do.

I had a pair of Tovi Parrakeets *(B. jugularis)* for many years; whenever I appeared, they invariably flew on to my head or shoulders, and followed me about in house and garden. They nested regularly (unsuccessfully); and this year, when just about to lay, the female was knocked over by a Redrump, and quickly died. The male I still have. Yet some Tovis are not nearly so tame as these always were. They are common.

The White-winged (or Yellow-winged) Parrakeet *(B. virescens)* is slightly larger. I have one, a male, which I am told is the only living specimen in Europe; certainly it is the only living specimen I have ever seen. He is very tame, and very fond of arguing the point with me. I like him much.

He has paired with a Golden-fronted Parrakeet *(B. tuipara)*, another very rare species. I obtained two females years ago, and have one still; they are the only specimens of the species I have ever seen. These are very timid birds, and the least attractive of any I have kept; probably a male would be tamer. The orange of the primary-coverts is rich beyond conception.

Quite one of the prettiest and most engaging of the genus is the tiny Tui Parrakeet *(B. tui)*. It is somewhat rare. I have had three at different times, and have found them rather delicate, and difficult to get into good plumage, the tail feathers being specially liable to come to grief. A male I now have has been with me eighteen months; but it was not until about two months ago that it was strong and clever enough on the wing to be left loose with the other birds. This Tui originally married the Tuipara; and they seemed a happy and contented couple. Then the White-wing arrived; and the fickle Tuipara forthwith deserted her tiny spouse and offered her hand and heart to the new comer. The Tui and the Tovi, both widowers, made friends, and are now inseparable.

The following, neither very uncommon, I have not kept:—

The All Green Parrakeet *(B. tirica)*, a long slim green bird, is said to make a delightful pet.

The Canary-winged Parrakeet *(B. chiriri)* is like *B. virescens*, but lacks the white flights. It is said to be a noisy bird; but I have not noticed it to be more so than the others. They all have shrill voices—but they never *scream* as do so many of the Parrots.

I am not acquainted with the four other members of the genus.

They should not be subjected to much cold, nor should they be too well fed. As a rule, hemp-seed should not be given to them.

R. Phillipps.

THE BLACKBIRD.

Sir,—Will you kindly inform me if the depth of colour of a Blackbird's bill is any indication of its age, or constitution.

C. L. Harrison.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Harrison :—

Ordinarily, the greatest height of colour is attained at the age of three years, but it is also very much a matter of constitution. Blackbirds, hand-reared and kept in cages indoors, do not obtain the same crocus-like colour of bill and eye cere as do wild birds, or even those kept in aviaries outdoors. So that while the colour may be some guide to age, the conditions under which the bird has been kept must be taken into consideration.

T. MARSHALL.

THE BRONZED DRONGO.

SIR,—A dealer lately advertized some Metallic Blackbirds, from India. I wrote and asked him to let me know the scientific name of the bird or a description of it. In reply, he writes:—"The Metallic Bird is the size of an English Starling, it is very handsome, very glossy; the Latin name is Metallic Bird." Could you, from the above description, identify the bird. I should like to get an Indian bird, called in Dr. Jerdon's book, the Malayan Whistling Thrush, which is something like an English Blackbird, but larger, with a metallic gloss on the back. I am afraid from the dealer's description, that the bird he has is hardly large enough to be the one I want.

C. L. HARRISON.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Harrison :—

The bird is probably "The Bronzed Drongo" (*Chaptia ænea*), a very common species in India, and an excellent singer. It should prove a very attractive cage-bird; and, if to be had at a fairly reasonable price, I should advise you to secure it.

A. G. BUTLER.

WET AND FROSTED GREEN FOOD.

SIR,—One continually sees, in print, that green food must never be given to birds either wet or with frost on it. I conclude that this only applies to birds kept indoors; as in my small aviary with about 50 birds, British and foreigners, last winter the seed was frequently coated over with frost, and in that condition freely eaten; also winter and summer, wet and fine, my birds have a daily supply of such weeds as the garden supplies, and at times, according to the weather, it is frequently wet and at other times frosty. Again, I never remove the bath—it is there all weathers—and the birds use it all weathers too, without any apparent ill effect—I have not had a death for two years, with such birds as Canaries, African Weavers, Indian Avadavats, Cutthroats, Java Sparrows, and British Finches—but, if you think it worth the space, I should like the opinion of some of our experienced members upon it in our Magazine.

W. T. PAGE.

"BRITISH BIRDS, THEIR NESTS AND EGGS."

SIR,—I see in the review of the second volume of the above work in the *Avicultural Magazine* for October, the sentence quoted, "If man would

let nature alone, he would find the balance perfect, but he interferes everywhere and makes a mess of it."

I would venture to put the question, "Is not man a part of "Nature"? Dr. Gätke remarks that man can affect birds in a very slight way directly; that species are exterminated by the destruction of their breeding-haunts by cultivation, &c. Is man to return to a nomadic life in order not to disturb the balance of nature? The rabbit became a pest in Australia through nature. If man was not to introduce the rabbit there, we must also ask him not to cultivate wheat, &c. It seems to me we must accept man, and consequently man's interference, as part of the whole design.

I must say my experience of rearing Linnets by hand, is that they are one of the easiest birds to rear, and are very healthy, but, like sparrows, they are not very tame after they are reared. Still, I should always recommend anyone who wants to keep a Linnet, to rear it by hand.

F. G. DUTTON.

BRITISH BIRD-CALLS.

SIR,—A short time ago I heard a bird-call which I did not recognise beyond remembering that I had read of it a few days previously. I searched the book in which I had seen it, without success, and the identity of the bird remains undecided. I thought, "Oh, for a list of bird-calls arranged alphabetically, so that any call, which may be heard, can be found at once!" I did not let the matter rest here, and have collected the recorded calls of more than 200 British Birds. Now, I seek the aid of the aviculturists, especially those who keep British Birds, both in supplying omitted calls and in amending those which appear to be erroneously given.

My list, as far as it has gone, is now in the press, and will probably be received ere this letter appears. I shall be pleased to send copies to all members who will send me a post-card signifying their desire that I should do so.

CHAS. LOUIS HETT.

THE GUTTURAL FINCH.

SIR,—I am surprised to note, in this number of the *Avicultural Magazine*, that this species is regarded, by a gentleman usually expert in keeping delicate birds, as by no means hardy.

About three years ago I purchased a pair of Guttural Finches and turned them into one of my bird-room aviaries; again, in 1896, I bought a pair which I turned into my largest cool aviary. None of these birds have ever had the slightest ailment or given me the slightest cause for anxiety: they are very inoffensive, only swearing when disturbed at meals by other birds, and the males sing almost as well as the White-throated Finch.

A. G. BUTLER.

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

REPORTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM FOREIGN CAGE BIRD SOCIETY.

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MEMBERS' SALE AND EXCHANGE COLUMN.

The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 6 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable.*

Pair of Pennant Parrakeets, two years in outdoor aviary, perfect health and plumage, 30/-; hybrid Cambayan Turtle Dove, 5/-.

B. C. THOMASSET, West Wickham, Kent.

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1895 Hawfinch hen, perfect plumage, 5/-; hen Green Singing Finch, ditto 2/6; Cuban Conure, says "Pretty Poll," 7/6; two 1897 cage-bred brown and white Bengalese hens, very healthy, 2/- each, or exchange—see "Wants."—E. D. H. DALY, Elswick House, Sandown, I. W.

(Continued on page 4 of cover).

(Continued from page 3 of cover).

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THE

Avicultural Magazine.

BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. IV.—No. 38. *All rights reserved.* DECEMBER, 1897.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Aviculturat Magazine* is sent free to members monthly.

The Secretary begs to remind members that their annual subscriptions became due on the 1st of November. They will greatly oblige him by remitting the amount (5/-) to him as soon as possible, and thus save him the trouble of making individual applications by letter.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

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As has been previously announced, it is intended to issue, this ye[ar] series of at least four hand-coloured plates, similar in style to those whic[h] appeared last year. The first plate of the series appears in this number of the Magazine. Members who wish for these *coloured* plates will be asked to pay an extra subscription of 5/-, and, as an additional privilege, will have all their Magazines dispatched by letter-post, and protected by a sheet of straw-board. If the funds of the Society permit, additional plates will be issued without further charge. All members who wish for coloured plates are requested to inform the Secretary of their desire at once, and to pay the extra subscription at the same time. This extra subscription must in every case be paid before the 1st of January, 1898. Those members who subscribed for the coloured plates last year, will be assumed to wish to do so again this year, unless they expressly inform the Secretary to the contrary.

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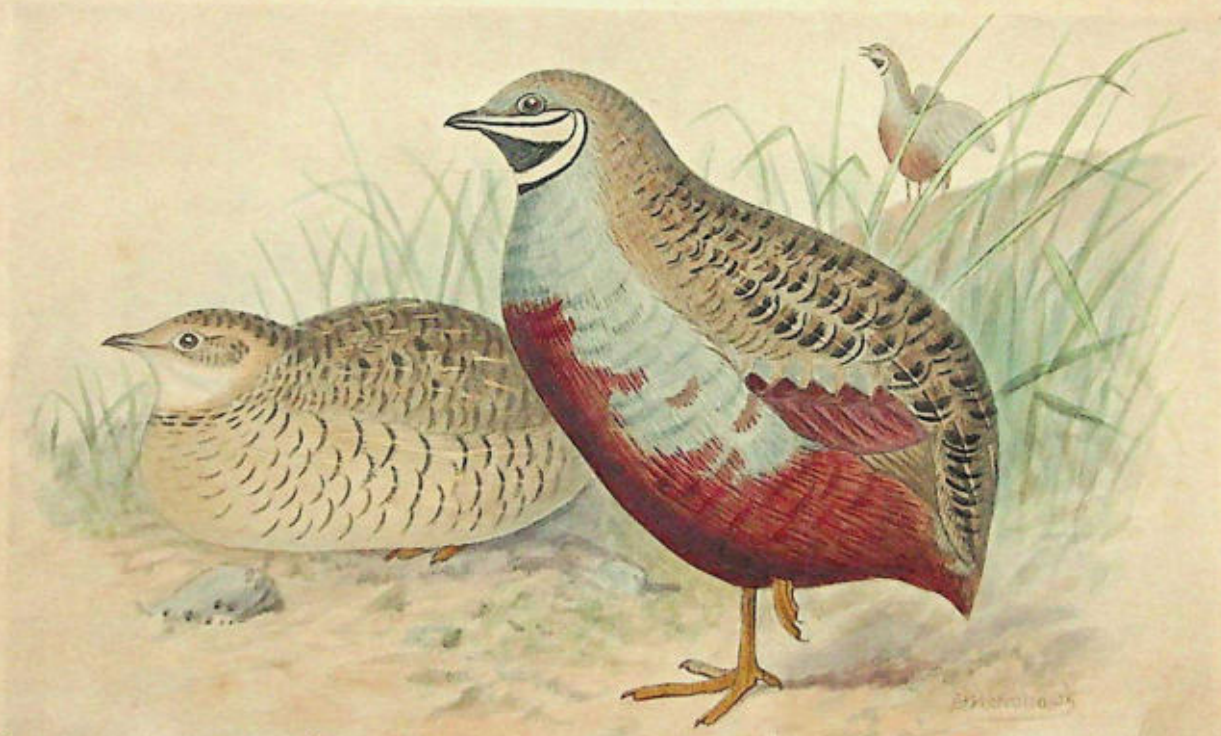
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(Continued on page 3 of cover).



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THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. IV.—No. 38. *All rights reserved.* DECEMBER, 1897.

PARROT NOTES.

By the Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton.

Whenever I undertake to write about Parrots, I am always astonished at the very little I have to say. No fairy godmother ve me the gift of imagination, and I seem to have little to tell cept some plain facts which are very much against all the ance with which Parrots are generally surrounded.

I must have been born with a hobby for Parrots, for I nnot recollect the time when to have a Parrot was not my great wish. It was probably a case of atavism, for I have always heard that my great-grandmother had a "bird and beast room," as it was called, at Sherborne. But I did not possess a Parrot till I was 15, since when I have rarely been without one, and often have twelve or fourteen. As I am 57, that means 42 years of Parrot-keeping, so I ought to know something about them. But I have only arrived at a sense of my ignorance.

I confess that I have been narrow-minded. It isn't every Parrot I care about—I am always in search of the ideal pet. It must be as small as a Bullfinch, talk like a Grey, have the intelligence of a dog, and the beauty of the Paradise Parrakeet. It must not bite and it must not scream, and it must be as tame as a Troupial. And it must be clean. In what species is this combination to be found? It will be seen that it at once excludes a good many, and therefore my experiences are more limited than if I had set to work to keep Parrots with the purse of a Rothschild and the thoroughness of a German.

Parrots must be fairly popular, for the demand seems unlimited. It would be interesting to know how many thousands are yearly imported to Liverpool alone. What becomes of the greater number of them? I think we know—the dustman's cart or the back garden receives the vast majority in a few weeks. But the mortality is chiefly confined to the Greys, though I was

told the other day, in the Zoo, that Parrot fever had at last invaded the Amazons.

We may suppose that everyone who buys a Parrot would agree that my list of qualifications is the right ideal. In what species will the nearest approach be found to it?

Now it must be understood at once that in what I am going to say I shall speak of species as a whole, and only of my own experience of them. If I say Cockatoos are noisy, I shall be extremely interested if any one can aver with truth that they have one which never screams, but it will not in the least affect my position, which is this, that I have found *the Cockatoos I kept* noisy.

I.—MACAWS.

People who write about Parrots generally begin with Macaws. Let me do so too. The Macaw excels all the other Parrots in intelligence and in affection for its master; and in powers of speech, so long as it is a cock-bird; but it is not smart, it is not clean, and none of mine could be warranted never to scream. To keep a Macaw one wants a Parrot-house and a park. They are beautiful objects when seen at a great height in the air, but in a garden they are too destructive to the smaller trees.

And then a tame bird never really enjoys its liberty. There are some Parrots you cannot trust out; but it is, I am convinced, because they fly out of reach the first time they are let out. Let a Parrot once *know its way home*, and it will always be wanting to come back as soon as it is turned out. I had one Blue and Yellow Macaw which, though a good talker, was an idiot. It flew to a branch, and there it would have stayed till it died, unless it were frightened off, or caught. But all my other Macaws came back. And then the trouble is, they come in at the windows of the house, and, if no one sees them, they may make matches of a priceless piece of furniture, before they are found out!

If one could only put the dog-like intelligence and affection of a Macaw into a Senegal or Meyer's Parrot, one would compound for the want of brilliant colour. But I fear for the ordinary householder the Macaw must be put outside the range of practical pets.

Yet even with Macaws (though I write as if I had been Parrot-keeper in the Ark, and had had every kind) my experience has been very limited. I do not say that I have not studied the other species in other people's keeping, but for myself, I have

only kept one Red and Yellow, one Hyacinthine, and four Blue and Yellows.

Why did Bechstein say the Blue and Yellow Macaw was a good talker? I have never known any Parrot equal it for learning and exact imitation of a special voice. I feel the Parrot that was said to have preserved a lost language must have been a Blue and Yellow Macaw. But then it must be a cock-bird—the hens would not learn a word. Let all would-be purchasers of Parrots beware of the superstition that sex makes no difference to a Parrot's power of speech. In Grey Parrots, I admit, the hens talk; but even in Grey Parrots, I believe, all the really wonderful talkers have been cock-birds. I have known hen Bengal Parrakeets say several sentences, but nothing like the number the cocks quite commonly master. But certainly my hen Macaws would not learn a word, though kept side by side with cocks that learnt easily and readily.

Bechstein gives the Great Green Macaw a good reputation talking. I never had one, but those I have seen did not strike me as talking well. How curious is its trick of blushing! Does any other animal share with man that most inconvenient endowment?

Have any of our members kept a Spix? I have only seen two—one that our Zoo acquired some years ago from the Jardin d'Acclimatation, and one bought by Mr. Rothschild from Mr. Jamrach and deposited in the Gardens. They were both ill-tempered: but as the first had a broken wing, it had probably been caught old. I was greatly tempted by the offer of one from Mr. Cross the other day, but there are so many calls on a parson's purse, that he cannot always treat himself to expensive parrots. I ought to have been keeper at the parrot-house in the Zoo.

It would be hard to take away the character of a whole species on the observation of only two individuals, but if I have not yet seen a good-tempered Spix, neither have I ever seen an ill-tempered Hyacinthine, or Glauca, or Leari. So sure am I always of their temper, that I never hesitate to scratch the heads of these kinds in the foreign Zoos. I see people looking at me as though I were Daniel in the lions' den, but truth to say, it is a very cheap piece of bravado. Their angelic tempers seem accompanied by a certain amount of stupidity. I have seen many, but only heard one talk. And I do not think they have the same individual attachment that the other Macaws have. They are equally good-tempered to all the world, but my Hyacinthine did not seem to make any difference between myself and others. However, on

this point I may not have had experience enough. I wonder why dealers always ask such a high price for Hyacinthine Macaws. They are not everybody's bird, for they can bend the wires of an ordinary Macaw's cage with ease, but dealers will ask for them double the price of a Spix, which is a far bird. They have one great advantage over other Macaws—are much quieter; they can make a row, but don't often cl to do it.

The Red and Yellow Macaw seems to me to be as good a talker as the Blue and Yellow, but my bird was a hen, and never learnt a word; yet it always knew me. It was not universally good-tempered. For the last eight or ten years of its life it was at the Zoo, but on my rare visits it always recollected me, and let me do just as I liked with it.

I do not think Macaws mind cold so long as they hav their liberty. I confess I do not understand *what* makes Parrot more susceptible to cold than another. I think I can which Parrots will not endure cold, and which will, but I do know why. *Psittacus* and *Pœocephalus* will not endure mu *Chrysotis* will—yet they are all tropical. Cockatoos will, Lorie will not, though they come from the same islands.

Here I must, for the present, bring my observations to an end. I think I ought to be rewarded by someone writing their experiences of the Crimson and Green, and Military Macaws.

(To be continued).

BREEDING OF THE NECKLACED DOVE.

By Arthur G. Butler, Ph.D.

The Necklaced Dove *(Turtur tigrinus)* is found from Burma through Malaysia southwards to the Moluccas. The German name for it is Pearl-necked Dove *(Perlhalstäubchen)*, which appears to me to convey to the mind a more accurate idea of the nuchal patch than the term "necklaced."

In 1894 I purchased what purported to be a pair of this species and turned them out into my garden aviary: I however soon discovered, from the fact that they were constantly disputing and cooing to each other, that I had two cock birds. I tried introducing a Collared Turtle Dove *(Turtur risorius)* but that also proved to be a male bird and became so aggressive that I gave it away. In 1896 one Necklaced Dove killed the other by

constantly pecking its head; thus my chance of breeding this species was, for the time, at an end.

In 1897 a genuine female was offered to me, and I gladly purchased it, and turned it out with the male (which had then ...d two winters in the open air). My old bird had become quie... tame, but the hen was very wild and I feared she would sure... be prevailed upon to breed; however I hung up an oblong mu... box under cover against the wall of the aviary, filling it half full of bran, and laying some hay and twigs upon the surface of the latter.

The first intimation which I received that an attempt at breeding had been made was the discovery, early in August, of a broken egg upon the floor. Looking from this to the box, I saw that a Bronze-necked Dove *(Zenaida auriculata)* was sitting in the nest. I naturally concluded that I was going to breed ...onze-necks; but was puzzled, a few days later, to see a Neck-...ed Dove incubating, whereupon I imagined that hybrids ...uld probably result. For nearly three weeks the four Doves ...k turns upon the eggs, the Bronze-necks doing the lion's ...hare of the work, and then I found two neatly divided half egg-shells on the ground and hoped that a young one had been born. I saw no more shells after this, and had almost forgotten what my Doves were about, when, on the morning of the 28th August, I saw what looked like the hen Bronze-necked Dove sitting huddled up in a corner. I picked it up, carried it indoors, and turned it into one of my covered aviaries, where it waddled about clumsily all day.

In the evening when I returned from business I went to look at my Nicobar Pigeons, one of which had broken or dislocated the last joint of one of its wings, when I perceived my Bronze-necks in perfect health sitting together on a branch: then the truth was manifest,—I had kept a young Dove away from its parents all day. Of course I promptly restored it to its nest, when I saw a wing lifted and knew that another bird yet remained therein.

The following day the first bird was again on the floor, and, when I attempted to replace it in the nest-box, the second one scuttled out and flopped helplessly along on the floor. Each day the same folly was repeated, for it was fully a week before the older bird could fly from the ground; although, starting from the nest-box, it could pass on the wing through the double aviary from end to end, a distance of about twenty-one feet. The second youngster never got so far as this, but on September

the 9th apparently went to roost on a box beside my cock Nicobar Pigeon, and had its bill split into fine splinters. In the morning it was dead beside the box.

By this time the older "squeaker" had acquired its full length of tail, and was clearly seen to be a young Necklaced Dove (of course with no trace of the white-spotted collar, which does not appear until later), then the wet nights gave it cramp, it became helpless, bronchitic, and on the 17th September it died.

This bird being in its first plumage, and therefore somewhat younger than those described by Count Salvadori, it is worth while to note its colouring:—Forehead and cheeks whitish ash; crown and mantle ash-grey, all the feathers more or less broadly fringed with vinaceous brown; back vinaceous brown in front; lower back and rump ashy-grey with smoky tips to all the feathers. Lesser wing-coverts mostly vinaceous brown with blackish shaft-streaks, but the outer ones white with blackish streaks, and the bend of the wing pure white; outer primary coverts ashy with blackish shaft-streaks; outer median and secondary coverts whitish ash, with white outer borders; remaining coverts smoky brown, washed externally with vinaceous, and with blackish streaks; primaries blackish, the second, third and fourth emarginate, and white-edged externally beyond the middle; the remainder narrowly from beyond the middle on both sides with rufous-brown; outer secondaries blackish, edged externally towards the tips with white; inner secondaries vinaceous with black shafts, edges clearer rufous-brown; two central tail-feathers smoky-brown, remaining feathers black, the three outer ones on each side broadly tipped with white; chin and front of the throat white gradually passing into vinaceous lavender on the breast, becoming paler and more buff-tinted on the abdomen and flanks and chalky white on the vent and under tail-coverts. Bill dark leaden-grey; feet dark flesh-pink; iris pale straw-yellow.

About the middle of September and before the death of the second of the two young birds (both of which proved to be males) I fixed up a series of pigeon holes, with shallow boxes filled with bran and hay, at one end of the aviary, and shut off the Nicobar Pigeons by closing the door of communication (which divides the garden aviary into two). Before the end of the month the hen bird was again sitting, this time steadily and without the aid of the Bronze-necks, upon two eggs; but, by about the second week in October these were deserted and, finding them clear, I blew them for my collection. Early in

November the hen was again sitting, but not steadily and the cold nights soon drove her from the nest.

This species has been bred by at least two aviculturists in Germany.

SEMI-DOMESTICATED MOORHENS.

By Chas. Louis Hett.

I have a small pond very near to my house, so near that the Moorhens from neighbouring water would never have taken possession of it of their own accord. With the view of establishing them, three years since I obtained some half-dozen pinioned young ones, and kept them in a fruit cage* not far from the water, until the ensuing spring. While in the cage, I accustomed them to take wheat from a Pheasant feeder, weighted so as to lift easily. After they were set at liberty, the presence of some men, who were working close to the pond, frightened them all away. *Apropos passant*, I may remark that, in my opinion, they would have remained if some faggots had been immersed, close to the bank, under which they could have concealed themselves without leaving the water. I afterwards had two refuges made of branches, etc., so that the birds are never far from cover.

The next autumn I obtained another consignment of young ones, and kept them in the cage until the spring. During the severe weather one of the previous batch returned, and remained about, with an absence of five days in the spring, until the new-comers were liberated. It had made friends through the wires, and quickly mated when the cage-door was left open. During 1896 the couple reared two broods. About the first week in October great commotions were heard in the pond, and all but one of the young disappeared, apparently driven away by the old ones. The remaining young one left this spring. This year I took regular notes of the nesting operations, a *résumé* of which may, I think, interest the members.

On the 16th of February my favourites were flirting. The next morning, although frosty, one of them was seen carrying building material in its beak from the little island to the nearest covert. The next day the rudiments of a nest were seen on the island. The male-bird had, for the past fortnight, been very tame. From this time until the 18th of March the weather was very raw and disagreeable, and the construction of the nest proceeded in a very desultory manner. The first egg appeared on the 19th of March, and others followed daily until the seventh

* A large cage-like arrangement in which fruit is grown to protect it from the birds.—Ed.

was laid on the 25th. The hen then began to sit closely, allowing us to pass within some eight or nine feet of her without leaving the nest. This favour was not accorded to others. The hen got up and made for covert the moment that she heard a strange voice; and one visitor only (a lady) was fortu[nate] enough to see her on the nest. While the laying proceeded[,] nest was constantly added to. This was continued during sit[ting] until April the 10th, when the nest presented the appearance [of] a bulky mass of weeds. The bottom had been raised as well as additions made. At this date the male was very bold, and was engaged in picking over the tops of the weeds, apparently searching for suitable food for the expected chicks. On the 15th the male was even bolder, and coolly sat preening his feathers, regardless of my watching the performance. The next day six young came off, one egg remaining in the nest. The demeanour of the male was peculiar, and quite different from the previou[s] season: he kept away from the brood and appeared to take [no] notice of them. Rain followed for two days, and the hen [was] continually brooding the young on the nest. When she lef[t] on the 18th the seventh egg had gone and the hatching number[ed] seven birds. The cock was now in attendance, although not nearly so fussy as in the previous season.

A few days afterwards it was noticed that some bread, which had been thrown on the water, had been taken into the nest: it is fair, therefore, to presume that the parents considered it suitable food for the young. The male was also observed feeding the hen as she sat brooding on the nest. For a few days it was noticed that the tops of the irises, which held a booby nest the previous year, were bent over, and on the 21st the foundations of a nest were to be seen. The male bird had been constantly about the place, but the hen had not been near it. Two days afterwards, the male and two chicks were in this nest, while the old one was occupied by the hen and the other young. On May the 1st I was surprised to see three eggs in the new nest. Further eggs were laid daily until the 5th, when absence from home suspended my observations. Before my leaving, however, the hen had commenced sitting. Returning home on the 17th, I found that the eggs had been stolen during my absence. On the 10th it was observed that a new nest had been built among the sticks near the island, and was nearly ready to receive the eggs. Further work was done at this new nest, but it was finally abandoned, and a new one commenced in a much safer position in a willow clump a little distance from the bank. The next day the robbed nest was pulled in pieces, and another nest observed on

the island. In all, three new nests had been built, and the robbed one destroyed, since the eggs were taken.. On the 22nd, further work was proceeding at the willow. The abandoned nest in the sticks was used for brooding the first clutch, and trodden out of all shape by them. The nest in the willow was worked at daily, and on the 29th two eggs were observed therein. The next day the eggs could not be counted, as fresh reeds had been added to the sides of the nest so as to partially conceal them. On the 15th of June an egg was floating on the water near the nest; the male bird was seen raising the sides of the nest round the sitting hen. On the 20th three chicks appeared, while three eggs remained in the nest. The next day there were still but three chicks, and I had to leave home. On my return, on the 25th, I counted six chicks, but one was in the water looking very weakly. The next day it was floating, dead, close to the nest; but the parent birds made no effort to remove it. The same day I saw one of the first hatching sitting on the nest, brooding the little ones. When the chicks were a week old the parents, for some reason or other, began to still further raise the sides of the nest. A few days afterwards, one of the old ones was brooding the young on the site of the original nest on the island, which was partially renewed by bending down the growing rushes; and the nest on the willow had the sides further repaired, as if in readiness for a fourth laying. This was continued for several days, but no eggs were laid. A new nest of reeds was observed on the island, but judging from its small size and bad workmanship, it was probably built by the young in imitation of the parents. The tops of a bed of irises were bent over some two feet above water, so as to form a platform, on which one of the adult birds was sunning itself.

On the 28th of August, it was noticed that all the nests, except that on the island (supposed to be the work of the young birds), were pulled to pieces, and the materials scattered about. In the latter end of September, the number of young birds was reduced to two; but whether this was the work of cats or rats, or was the result of the others being driven away by the parents, can only be conjectured. None of the commotions heard in 1896 have been noticed this year

A comparison of the behaviour of my Moorhens with that of those in St. James's Park, is curious. While mine are nearly as tame, so far as we are concerned, as those in London, yet they remain as wary as wild birds, with regard to strangers; while those in the Park are quite indifferent to the presence of anyone.

THE BRITISH BIRDS AT THE LONDON AND PROVINCIAL ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S EXHIBITION.

Held in the Aquarium, Westminster, on Nov 2nd, 3rd, & 4th, 18[illegible]7.

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

The members of this Society are heartily to be congratulated on their fine Exhibition of Birds, held on the first Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of November.

The total number of exhibits must have been great; and possibly to this may be attributed various errors in numbering, missorting of cages—getting worse each day it seemed to me—and other little matters vexatious to the spirit of the orderly man; a little more organization or supervision would not have hurt anybody.

The sickness and mortality among the birds was no inconsiderable, for which some of the exhibitors were not wholly irresponsible. Apparently quite a number were more or less debarred from drinking by their over-careful owners. The very shallow show-cages, too shallow to allow some of the birds to moderately extend their wings, and cruelly exposing nervous and timid species, were sad to behold. And can all this pretty painting of the inside of cages be otherwise than injurious? Let me state a case. I purchased a bird on the Wednesday, not a first class, but an apparently healthy, specimen. On the Thursday it was lumpy; and on the Friday morning when I took it home it was nearly as round as a ball. For a day or two it was very bad, but has since moderately improved. On inspecting the cage, I found not only that the inside had been painted light green but that actually the water-tin had been painted *inside* and out. I suppose birds must be exhibited, but exhibitors need not go out of their way to predispose the poor captives to sickness and death.

Thanks to the glass roof of the Aquarium having been thoughtfully covered over, the light was atrocious, rendering it practically impossible to study some of the rarer exhibits as one would have wished to have done.

Once more this Society has shown that it is possible to have a great exhibition in the middle of the week, without intruding on the sanctity of Sunday.

Of the British birds I did not take much notice, for I did not know that I should have to write about them; and I spent most of my time—all too little—among the foreigners; however, as our Hon. Secretary proposes writing about the latter, for the sufficient reason that he had not time to look at the former at all, I must just do my best.

For many years of my life I studied British birds in their natural haunts, and likewise as pets—I lived among the birds. As pets, some are incomparable; but pets are one thing, common species as show-birds quite and altogether another. Then some that are beautiful when wild are comparatively despicable as show-birds. What more beautiful in the wild state than a pair of Bullfinches and the male Blackbird! but over the dowdy creatures at a show I cannot get up any interest. And concerning those that do not materially lose their colours: I would infinitely rather see them in the fields and pastures.

The Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Linnet, Siskin Redpoll and Twite, ...sses I "passed by on the other side." It is curious that in ...ss 87, "Any other variety of Finch or Bunting," although I ...mply strolled down the line without a thought of awards (for I went to look at the birds, not to criticise the judging), only five caught my eye, and I now observe that four of these gained the first four prizes. I admired Mr. Raine's Hawfinch as much as I condemned its owner for placing such a comparatively large bird in so small a cage. Miss Benbow came second with a large, tight, not very bright, Greenfinch, a bird always associated in my mind with supper for the many Hawks of my early days. Mr. Lott came next with a very large Chaffinch, and Mr. Allen fourth with a nice Snow Bunting. I have a note of faint praise against Mr. Jones' Reed Bunting, which probably I looked at as being less common than the majority of the very common birds of which the class was composed.

Against only one bird in the Lark class have I a note—against Mr. and Mrs. Vincent's young Wood Lark, a very favourite bird of mine, and always interesting as being the only bird in this country that sings on the wing at night. I dare say the Blackbirds, Starlings, and Thrushes in class 89 were all right—indeed, I am convinced that they must have been; but somehow against only one of the whole lot have I a note, against Mr. Kneen's well marked Thrush (2nd); nevertheless I am rather suspicious of the Show Thrush, as it is a bird not always innocent of colour-food. Classes 90 and 96 (Migratory, and small Insectivorous) were more interesting; the former con-

tained over 40 birds; but to my mind the general quality of the exhibits was poor, and some were poorly. Notwithstanding the excellency of Mr. Maxwell's bird (1st, in the large class)—and Mr. Frostick's (1243) was not bad—the sight of so many (seven) Swallows in show-cages was sickening; at least one succumbed during the show. There were an unusual number of White-throats, Lesser White-throats, and Chiffchaffs, difficult birds to keep for a long season; and none were in good form. The various Wagtails did not come out nearly so well as one occasionally sees them; but the Redstarts and Redwings were looking smart, and should not have been so severely let alone by the Judge, Mr. Erskine's Redstart alone getting V.H.C. There were three fairly good Ring Ouzels; and Mr. Lowne obtained a second with a good Wheatear, Messrs. Fulljames and Philips likewise exhibiting satisfactory specimens. A solitary Fieldfare was ignored; it was not a well coloured bird, but, for a *caged* Fieldfare, was in good plumage. Mr. Poynter's Wren declined to be interviewed, for which I was really very sorry; Mr. Wel[illegible] Great Tit treated me with like discourtesy (both gentlemen [illegible] humanely supplied a shelter for their exhibits), and M[illegible] Dewhurst's would have done *ditto* if it had not been in such a miserable cage that escape was impossible. Two of the much rarer Crested Tits appear in the catalogue, but I remember seeing but one, and that looked sickly; the other may have been present; but several exhibits which appeared before the Judge were not apparent on Wednesday. A Nuthatch seemed contemplating suicide, and likewise two unfortunate Spotted Flycatchers; how dull and spiritless they were compared with the wild bird! The Nightingales were not much, and one looked remarkably like a Sprosser. Mr. Dewhurst's Greenshank appeared in good order, and might have been noticed—for it is a much more suitable bird for a show than a Swallow or even than a Spotted Flycatcher. Two Robins and a Blackcap about complete the list of species exhibited in these interesting classes.

In the Rare-feathered class, I should like to have seen Miss Martin's striking Fawn Starling placed first; it was, if anything, in better condition, and is of a rarer colour, than Mr. Herbert's White Blackbird. Mr. Prior's Pied Blackbird (3rd) was a handsomely-marked specimen. I have a moderately favourable [illegible]ote against Mr. Hiscock's Drab Greenfinch (5th), but do not rem[illegible]m-ber the bird. I think there were eight birds in the class wh[illegible]n I passed it; and to give six "prizes" under such circumstan[illegible]es is not *prize* giving at all, unless the birds are of exceptional merit, which the Cinnamon Chaffinch (4th) and Cinnamon Star-

ling (6th) did not appear to my eyes to be. Only six prizes were given in class 90. Besides, *First* in a class of eight or nine (classes 88, 91, and 93) should not be placed on a level with *First* in a class of forty-four. Both in my notes and in my memory, Mr. Taylor's White Linnet (H.C.) and Messrs. Kilbury's White Sky Lark (V.H.C.) have become mixed. I think they were both good birds in bad plumage.

In the A. O. V. class, I do not know if there has been a mixing up of the names, the numbers, or of my brains, but the Missel Thrush, which I took to be Mr. Wilson's (C.), was far superior to its neighbour (2nd), and should have been placed in a much better position; but, perhaps, it was not "steady" enough to please the judge; some judges seem to prefer a steady, lifeless bird to a lively, vigorous one. The Magpies and Jays were scarcely up to the mark; but the two Great Spotted Woodpeckers were moderately good.

The only class that now remains for me to deal with, that for "Any Variety of Rare Continental Bird," should have a place in every large Exhibition, and I hope to see it at the Palace in the future, although the word "rare" is quite out of place. In this class there appeared two good specimens of my favourite Pied Rockthrush, Mr. Fulljames' taking the first prize, Mr. Frostick's the third. Two Blue-throated Warblers were announced in the catalogue, and both "exhibits" seem to have been before the judge, but no such bird was visible when I paid my first visit to the show, *i.e.*, on the Wednesday. These charming but delicate pets are not fit for show life: why cannot exhibitors be satisfied with the many robust species! Cage 1209 had disappeared, but cage 1208 had not. In it, however, instead of a Bluebreast, I found a Blue Rockthrush (2nd), a good specimen; but it is a far easier species to keep in health than the Pied Rockthrush. Mr. Lowne's Ortolan Bunting (4th) should have been placed in class 87. Concerning the Eastern Nightingale, known in this country by the rather misleading name of Greater Nightingale, and in Germany by the handy name of Sprosser, it was some two or three years ago that it was brought under my notice that a few were being exhibited as British; but I must add that, as I know to my cost, not every bird that is sold as a Sprosser is a Sprosser. I have such an one now,—as honest a Western Nightingale as ever was hatched. Mr. Fulljames' bird was certainly a Sprosser, but I am not so sure about No. 1212, not so sure by a long way as I am of the bird in class 90 which I have already referred to; but the two species are difficult to distinguish in a bad light.

AMONG THE FOREIGN BIRDS AT THE ROYAL AQUARIUM.

By H. R. Fillmer.

I have never yet seen a building perfectly adapted for a bird-show, but of all unsuitable places the Westminster Aquarium is the worst. The light is extremely bad in the daytime; the atmosphere loaded with tobacco-smoke is most offensive to non-smokers (in which class the birds must be included); and the fact that a variety entertainment is going on upon the stage in the centre of the hall all the afternoon does not (to put it mildly) assist one's quiet enjoyment of the birds. Still, in spite of the noise, the smoke, and the dim light, the Aquarium Show of November 1897 was well worth a visit; for the collection of birds has, possibly, never been excelled for rarity and interest.

In numbers alone the Show was a notable one, there being 193 entries of foreign birds.

The Class for Rare Continental Birds is a capital idea and contained some very interesting birds, including a Blue Rock Thrush, two Pied Rock Thrushes, and two specimens of *Daulias philomela* (one entered as a Greater Nightingale the other as a Sprosser). The Blue Rock Thrush was catalogued as a "Blue-throated Warbler." There was also an Ortolan Bunting in this class—this species is a fairly frequent visitor to our shores and is recognised as British by the Avicultural Society.

It is not my intention to give anything like a detailed report of the Show and I shall, therefore, pass over in silence the class for Amazons and Grey Parrots, and come to the more interesting class for Macaws, Cockatoos and Parrots (other than Amazons and Greys) including "Loreys," (as the catalogue has it). Here were several birds well worth a long journey to see. The gem of the collection was, I think, the beautiful Hawk-headed Parrot exhibited by Mr. Maxwell. Mr. Fulljames' Hyacinthine Macaw, which took first prize, was in fine condition, but appeared to me to be rather smaller than other specimens which I have seen, and in rarity it scarcely equals the Hawk-headed Parrot. The Spix Macaw was unfortunately in rather poor feather. The two Ganga Cockatoos, sent by different exhibitors, were a pair; and visitors to the Show had, therefore, an opportunity of observing the striking difference between the sexes in this rare species (the female lacks the red head and crest which are the distinguishing features of the male). The

pair of Meyer's Parrots were charming little birds, but their tails were very rough. The Bronze-wing Parrot was quite new to me—is this the same as the Dusky Parrot (*Pionus violaceus*)? A Blue-eyed Cockatoo, a Blood-stained Cockatoo, two Senegal Parrots, two or three Macaws of common species, a Purple-capped Lory, and another Lory (I think *Eos reticulata*), made up a class of most unusual merit. The Blue-streaked (or Reticulated) Lory had nothing to eat but canary seed and dry bread, and was evidently starving—probably it died before the Show was over.

The Class for Budgerigars Love Birds and Pigmy Parrots contained nothing of special interest except two pairs of Blue-crowned Hanging Parrots.

The Class for Parrakeets and Lorikeets contained many good birds. It included a Blue-bonnet, two pairs of Lineolated Parrakeets, a pair of Orange-flanked Parrakeets (*Brotogerys pyrrhopterus*), two pairs of Many-coloureds, and a Turquoisine, not to mention several commoner species. Of the Lorikeets, only the Ornamented and Forsten's were represented. The Purple-breasted Lory was in the wrong class but, nevertheless, got a prize.

In the Class for Waxbills, Mannikins and Combasous, Mr. Maxwell's lovely pair of Violet-eared Waxbills were most deservedly first. The third prize went to a pair of Mannikins, which I could not identify. There were also Aurora Finches, Cordon Bleus, Crimson Finches, a cock African Fire Finch (rarely seen at a Show), Green Avadavats and Magpie Mannikins. A good Class, but not equal in interest to the Parrot Classes.

The Class for Weavers and Whydahs comprised a Crimson-throated Whydah and a Long-tailed Whydah along with some common species.

The Class for "Any other variety of seed-eating birds" (Why "variety," by the way?) was of great merit, and contained 34 entries. Apparently the Judge did not consider it to be part of his duty to disqualify birds in the wrong class, and under the circumstances I am not surprised at this: for to do so he would have had to draw a hard and fast line between the Grassfinches and the other *Ploceidæ* with nothing in the Schedule to guide him, and that was a task from which any Judge might shrink. The result, however, was that birds of the same genus were allowed to compete in different Classes—the Class now under consideration containing several entries of Weavers and Java Sparrows. A pair of Long-tailed Grassfinches were first, a Three-coloured Parrot Finch second, pairs of Parrot Finches

third and fourth, Gouldian Finches fifth, and a male Cuba Finch sixth. Mr. Cushny's Citril Finch ought not to have been passed unnoticed, and Mr. Maxwell's Mexican Siskin deserved more than a V.H.C. The Diuca Buntings, also, were worthy of a card, at least. All the prizes, except the sixth, were awarded to Grassfinches—which was rather hard on the Finches. The millet seed with which the Mexican Siskin was supplied was a most unsuitable diet for the little fellow.

Insectivorous or Fruit-eating Birds, larger than a Blue Robin.—The first prize was awarded to a splendid Green-crested Touracou, the second to a Toco Toucan, the third to a pair of Lettered Aracari, the fourth to a beautiful Andaman Starling, the fifth to a Purple-headed Glossy Starling, and the sixth to a Malabar Starling. A Blue-winged Green Bulbul was V.H.C. —why will the owner of this bird persist in calling it a "Blue-winged Sugar-bird"?

Insectivorous or Fruit-eating Birds, not larger than a Blue Robin.—This was a splendid Class. The judging which gave the first prize to a Superb Tanager over the heads of so many rare birds was, to say the least, eccentric. I do not profess to know the species of Mr. Maxwell's bird (entered as a Blue-faced Tanager) which was placed second, but it was a lovely bird in perfect condition, and probably the first of its kind which has been shown in England. The third prize-winner much resembled the female *Dacnis cayana*, but had blue on the breast as well as on the head. A Tri-coloured Tanager was fourth; a pair of Fuscous Honey-eaters fifth, and a Violet Tanager sixth. The Class also contained a nice pair of Zosterops and some good Tanagers of various common species. A Pileated Finch should have been "wrong-classed."

The Members' Classes presented rather a mixture, but there were several entries of great merit. Among them I must specially mention Mr. Maxwell's pair of Violet Tanagers (the hen being seldom imported) and Mr. Fulljames' Golden-crowned New Zealand Parrakeets (*Cyanorhamphus auriceps*). These last-named birds were catalogued as "New Zealand Parrakeets," a name usually reserved for the commoner and less attractive *C. novæ-zealandiæ*. Mr. Frostick's Bulbul took my fancy greatly. He calls it a Persian Bulbul—is this the same as the Syrian Bulbul, and, again, is the Scinde Bulbul the same or a different bird?* I must confess that the Bulbuls are beyond me, though

* The Syrian Bulbul (*P. xanthopygus*) is perfectly distinct from the Persian, but the latter occurs at Scinde, where however it is smaller, and not so good a singer as the Persian bird.—A. G. B.

they are not quite so confusing as the different species of Zosterops.

It was a splendid Show, and its splendour was entirely due to two exhibitors (Mr. Fulljames and Mr. Maxwell) who sent about 45 entries each in the Foreign Classes, and one or the other of whom was the owner of almost every rare and interesting exhibit in those Classes.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE QUAKER PARRAKEET.

SIR,—I shall be very grateful for information in answer to the following queries :—

Is the Quaker Parrakeet known by any other name ? The Colour ? Size ? And locality ?

I have had the offer of one, but having never had the "Quaker Parrakeet," I am quite in the dark.

M. HUSBAND.

The following reply was sent to Miss Husband :

The Grey-breasted Parrakeet *(Myopsittacus monachus)* is very commonly known as the Quaker Parrakeet. It comes from Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay, is a common bird, and is usually obtainable for a few shillings.

Speaking generally, the upper parts are green, wings mostly blue, while the upper parts of the head, the cheeks, throat, and breast, are grey; and the under parts are yellowish-green.

Notwithstanding their plain colour, I have seen real beauties; but too often they are nothing to look at. They are naturally very sociable; and, when made pets of, especially if there be only one, they will usually lavish their love of companionship upon their owners. They are hardy, and may be taught to talk a little; but they bear a bad character for screaming, especially when kept in a cage, and are not general favourites.

To aviculturists, however, they are intensely interesting from the circumstance that, unlike any other known member of the Parrot order, they build nests, not of strips of bark, in holes, like the Lovebirds (see our Magazine, Vol. II, pp. 49 and 128), but of sticks at the top of tall trees. They have not infrequently built nests in captivity.

Including the tail, the Quaker Parrakeet is about 11½ inches long—roughly speaking, of the size of a Turtle Dove.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

JAVA SPARROWS.

SIR,—It may be of interest to state that a young Grey Java Sparrow flew, on November 6th, in my garden aviary. This speaks well for the hardiness of the species, for the last days of October were very sharp, with east winds and dense fogs lasting mostly all day, and up to the present we

have had heavy fogs daily—yet this young bird is one of the strongest I have seen.

This reminds me I omitted to describe the young in my article in last month's Magazine. Briefly, they resemble in colour a light hen Bullfinch; they have black beaks—the flesh-coloured legs and feet being the only points of resemblance to the adult birds; but at about three months they assume the full adult plumage.

W. T. PAGE.

BIRD CALLS.

SIR,—Can any member help me to identify two calls heard in August, this year? One was "te-te-te," uttered rapidly in a long series without variation. It was heard for about a week in the neighbourhood of my raspberries, but the bird was not seen.* The second was "peewit," uttered by a bird about the size of a Common Bunting, perched on the top of a small spruce in my garden; when alarmed it dropped down into the bushes. It appeared to be too large for a Lesser Redpoll, but I know of no other bird of about the size which uses the call in question.

CHAS. LOUIS HETT.

FOOD FOR THE PIN-TAILED NONPAREIL.

SIR,—It has always been insisted on that, when first imported, *Erythrura prasina* requires paddy-rice (its natural food) in order to bring it into condition.

On the 19th of February, 1897, I purchased a pair of this species and was much exercised in my mind as to what I should do, owing to the utter impossibility of obtaining rice in the ear. I had tried everywhere and could not get even a sample of this seed. I even asked a friend to enquire at the docks, but he told me he could not get it, as the demand for it was insufficient to induce the importers to ship it to England.

Suddenly it occurred to me these birds might possibly be induced to accept oats as a substitute, The result was most satisfactory; the oats were eaten with relish and, I believe, with better effect. My hen was out of health when I purchased her, unable to reach her perch excepting by clambering up the wires; but she gained strength and, for several months, managed to fly up to roost; then again she became weak, and in August she died.

The cock bird got well through its autumn moult, and is still in fine condition and perfect plumage.

I now use oats instead of paddy-rice for all rice-eating birds, and find them to do better on them: this is not surprising; for there can be no doubt that the former seed is far more sustaining and nutritious than the latter.

A. G. BUTLER.

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* This might be the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. One of its notes is much like the spring call of the Wryneck.—W. H. ST. Q.

FOOD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

SIR,—I see in the November No. some remarks by Mr. Perkins on the smaller Warblers. As I have only kept four soft-food birds in my life, my observations must be taken with great reserve.

Supposing insects are essential, are there not dried mosquitoes sold (from Germany) which might do?

But are insects essential? Some 40 years ago, I think, there were some very interesting articles on the management of Nightingales, etc., by Sergeant Hanly, of the 2nd Life Guards, in the *Field*. Sergeant Hanly had succeeded in breeding Nightingales in a breeding-cage. His diet was lean raw beef pounded with yolk of hard-boiled egg. Is it certain that *in confinement* the natural food is best?

The Blue Mountain Lory, the late Mr. Jamrach told me, could never be kept as long as they tried to feed it on honey and other soft food. It was not till they put it entirely on to seed that they were successful. After that, they were imported in large numbers without risk.

Again, the Tui bird—a great honey-eater—Mr. Abrahams told me that give them honey was fatal. It may not be so, but an acquaintance of [illegible] *would* give his birds honey, and in that case the result predicted by [illegible]. Abrahams at once followed. The bird was seized with fits and died. [illegible] appears to do well fed on biscuit and condensed milk; or on boiled mashed potato—both articles which are very far removed from the natural food.

I would humbly suggest that someone should try the raw beef and egg regimen with the smaller Warblers.

I cannot say that Mr. Perkins' dietary *sounds* a likely one. An aviary may have something to do with the ill-success. Many birds might do well in a cage that would die in an aviary.

F. G. DUTTON.

I fully agree with the main point in Mr. Dutton's letter, viz., that the natural food of a bird in a state of freedom is not necessarily that which is best suited to maintain it in health in captivity.

With regard to dried mosquitoes (or flies), it seems to be generally recognised that their food value is inferior to that of ants' eggs, and that they are useful only as affording a variety and (possibly) a cheaper food.

With all respect to the memory of the late Mr. Jamrach, I feel bound to point out that the notion that Lorikeets should be fed on seed is now almost exploded. They live well enough on biscuit soaked in boiled milk, and fruit, with a little seed. Doubtless they *can* be made to live on seed alone, sometimes for a good long time, but it is no more a proper diet for them than bread-crumbs and hempseed are for a Robin. Of course, biscuit and milk are quite as unnatural a food for Lorikeets as seed is, so that this in no way weakens Mr. Dutton's argument.

If condensed milk agrees so well with Tuis, it seems strange that honey should be fatal to them—for the only way in which honey could affect them injuriously would, I suppose, be by causing excessive fatness and thus producing fits. But condensed milk is nearly as sweet as honey,

and therefore, one would imagine, almost as fat-producing. I am not striving to throw a doubt on the fact that honey is bad for captive Tuis, for that seems fairly well established, but only wondering why it should be so.

I do not share Mr. Perkins' high opinion of egg as a food for soft-bills. It is certainly very nourishing, but I fancy it is not always easily digested. And there is such a thing as giving too many mealworms.

Will Mr. Dutton kindly tell us which are the birds that do better in a cage than in an aviary? I have never found this to be so with any which I have kept.

I have heard it hinted that if the smaller Warblers are to be kept at all they must be fed largely on gentles. But, as it has been well expressed, "a bird which can only be kept on gentles is not worth keeping at all."

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

[Further correspondence on this subject of "Food for Soft-billed Birds" is invited. The greatest diversity of treatment prevails, and all members who have successfully kept the rarer or more delicate species, whether British or foreign, are urged to state the food which they have found to be, in their experience, the best.—ED.]

THE NOMENCLATURE OF FOREIGN DOVES.

SIR,—Considerable confusion exists with regard to the correct name of many foreign Doves.

In 1894 I obtained a pair of Turtles, the name of which I was ignorant of at the time. I subsequently found that at the Zoological Gardens the species was labelled "Vinaceous Turtle-dove." I, therefore, since then have always referred to these Doves by the above name.

This pair has been in my possession since the spring of the above year, and I have sent their young to aviculturists in various parts of the country, always under the above name; so that the species is known thus to several aviculturists.

Another, somewhat larger bird with a black ring on its neck, somewhat resembling a large Barbary Dove, has for years been named the "Cambayan Turtle" by the Zoological Society.

It appears however that the above learned Society have now discovered that they have been confusing the two species; and they are now labelling the two species *vice-versa*. My birds are, therefore, Cambayan Turtle-doves *(T. senegalensis)*.

The true *Turtur vinaceus* is considerably *larger* than the Barbary Dove, which species it closely resembles, although somewhat browner in colour. It is often confounded with the Half-Collared Turtle *(Turtur semitorquatus)*, a species slightly *smaller* than the Barbary Dove.*

The true *Turtur senegalensis* has no ring on the neck. It is of a ruddy pink hue, with small black markings on the throat. The rump and wing coverts are of a delicate bluish grey.

D. SETH-SMITH.

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* This is certainly incorrect: for Count Salvadori (the greatest authority on the *Columbæ*, gives the total length of *Turtur semitorquatus* as 12.4 inches, and that of *T. risorius* as about 10 inches. These measurements are borne out by the skins in the British Museum and specimens which I have kept of both.—A. G. B.

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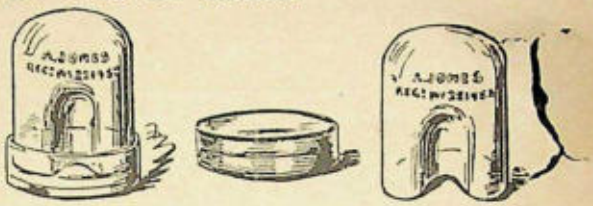
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(Continued on page 4 of cover).

(Continued from page 3 of cover).

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

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THE

Avicultural Magazine.

BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. IV.—No. 39. *All rights reserved.* JANUARY, 1898.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to members monthly.

The Secretary begs to remind members that their annual subscriptions became due on the 1st of November. They will greatly oblige him by remitting the amount (5/-) to him as soon as possible, and thus save him the trouble of making individual applications by letter. Those members who subscribe for the coloured plates should remit the special subscription at the same time.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

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(*Continued on page 3 of cover*).

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THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. IV.—No. 39. *All rights reserved.* JANUARY, 1898.

THE BRONZE-WINGED PIGEON.

(Phaps chalcoptera).

By D. Seth-Smith.

Of colours less startling than many of the feathered habitants of the Australian groves, the members of the Pigeon be, one and all, from the magnificent Crowned Pigeon to tiny Diamond Dove, are unsurpassed for quiet beauty of nage and gracefulness of shape and bearing.

In most parts of that Island-continent, so rich in feathered gems, the Bronze-wing abounds, and is sometimes seen in large numbers feeding on the stubble-fields; or from a distance the mournful love-note of the male is heard, as, with expanded crop and bowed head, he flaps his jewelled wings to attract the attention of his mate.

During the dry season, we are told that numbers of Bronze-wings may be observed, towards evening, winging their way, with arrow-like flight, towards some distant pool. The thirsty traveller notes the direction of their flight, knowing full well that by careful observation of the habits of these birds he may be able to find water to refresh himself and his steed.

In a wild state, Bronze-wings are said to nest from August to December.

Selby tells us that "It breeds in holes or decayed stumps of trees near the ground, and not unfrequently upon the surface of the earth itself." This statement is evidently far from correct, for in captivity the highest available position is always chosen for a nest, which is built preferably in the open.

Of the foreign members of the Dove tribe, the Bronze-wing is one of the best known, but is, nevertheless, by no means frequently met with in living collections at home. Why this should be is not clear, seeing that the species possesses so many attractive qualities. It is easily tamed, quite hardy, very

beautiful, and, as will be hereafter shown, a free breeder in captivity.

Those of our members who possess the old Jardine's Naturalists' Library will be familiar with a life-like illustration of a cock Bronze-wing, which gives a very fair idea of the general appearance of the bird.

In size it nearly equals the English Ringdove *(Columba palumbus)*. The plumage of the male is chiefly of a mottled brown on the upper parts, which, in some lights, presents a greenish tint. The breast is a very delicate vinous pink, which shades into purplish blue on the sides of the neck. A well defined white line encircles the eye and extends backwards towards the nape. The tail is blue-grey, and the under wing-coverts orange.

It is in the wings that the great beauty of the species lies. These present in the sunlight the most exquisite tints—sapphire, ruby, and opal all being in turn reflected.

The hen closely resembles her mate but is of a slender build, and the colours on the wing-coverts are brilliant and of a greener tint. She lacks also the forehead markings of the cock.*

I obtained a cock Bronze-wing on the 28th of May, 1896. He had just arrived from Tasmania, and was somewhat rough in feather although otherwise in good condition. He soon became quite tame, and, until a short time ago, remained a bachelor in my aviary. He never interfered in the least with the other occupants of his domain, some of which were Doves of various species—and Doves are not usually the most peaceable of birds.

In August last, I received a note from a dealer, to the effect that he had a hen Bronze-wing for sale; and, accordingly, I lost no time in providing my old bachelor with a wife. She was rather wild at first, but, as is the nature of her species, very soon became tame. The cock seemed very anxious to commence housekeeping; he would fly up on to an old basket-lid that was fixed to some branches, and there he would remain, sometimes for hours together, cooing and gently flapping his wings. At the end of September, a slight nest of twigs was formed on the top of the aforesaid basket-lid. All the nesting-material was carried up by the cock, the hen merely placing it in position. The pair took turns in the tedious process of incubation, the cock sitting during the greater part of the day, and the hen

* Consisting of a large patch of buff.—A. G. B.

at night; and, although the weather became very cold—the thermometer falling almost to freezing-point on two or three occasions—the first egg was successfully hatched on the 10th of October, the second youngster leaving the shell two days later.

The old birds proved most devoted parents, never allowing their charges to be uncovered. Had they been less attentive to their young, the latter must have succumbed in a very short time to the cold. The young birds left the nest when just over two weeks old, but were fed by their parents until they had attained the age of six weeks or more.

The young closely resembled their parents from the first, but the wing-markings were less distinct. The cock showed clearly the burnt-sienna on the forehead when still in the nest.

I consider Bronze-wings the most attractive of the larger of the foreign Doves. They are of a tame nature, and do not ck themselves about when one enters the aviary, as do many he Dove tribe. Mine are fed upon canary and millet seed, a little hemp occasionally.

There is a closely allied species, the *Phaps elegans*, or paline Pigeon, which is not uncommon in many parts of Australia; but I have never seen it offered for sale, neither is it represented in the Zoological Gardens. It would doubtless be a most desirable species for aviculturists. It is of a richer brown than, and in many respects closely resembles, its congener.

SOME RARE BUNTINGS.

By R. A. Todd.

I have recently acquired three Finches not often met with in captivity, regarding which some notes may be of interest to members of the Society.

The most conspicuous is the Towhee or so-called Red Eyed Ground Finch of North America *(Pipilo erythrophthalmus)*. In colour it is curiously similar to the Shâma; the head, back and wings, deep glossy black; chest, breast and abdomen, white; sides, bright chestnut; tail, black, the outer feathers being white e outer side. The hen is brownish where the cock is black. ather over seven inches, including tail, which is over three s long. Dr. Sharpe places this species among the Buntings, he position is not unquestioned. The name is derived from ry very frequently uttered by the cock, and is a very close imitation of it. The bird is undoubtedly pugnacious, and should only be associated with others of its own size. It takes readily

to the usual seeds, but I think is largely insectivorous, as it is always eager for mealworms, and will consume a considerable quantity of egg food and ants' eggs. I do not find that it remains on the ground more than other finches, rather the contrary, and in this respect the English name does not seem justified; the eyes in my birds are distinctly not red but brown, which is described as a feature of the immature bird. When on the ground it frequently scratches like the Combassou, and if its food be placed in an open pan will at once scatter the whole of it over the floor of the aviary.* It will, no doubt, be perfectly hardy in our climate.

The White-throated Song Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), also a native of the Eastern United States, is a trifle larger than the Chingolo Song Sparrow, the tail in particular being longer and more graceful. The general colour is a greyish-brown, mottled with black centres to the feathers; the most distinctive features are the white throat, from which the species takes its name, and a dash of yellow over the lores. The hen has hardly a trace of the yellow dash, her throat being greyish, and the breast more very like a thrush. My birds have so far hardly uttered a sound, but I suppose they would naturally not sing in the winter. They are even fonder of mealworms than the Towhee, and will pluckily snatch one out of the very beak of a much larger bird. They appear to be far bolder in character than their Chingolo relative, which with me has always shown a most retiring disposition, usually hiding in a corner of the aviary during the middle of the day, though fairly active in the morning and afternoon, but even then rarely bold enough to come forward for a mealworm.

The third species I had some difficulty in identifying; it is not always easy to make out an obscure bird from scientific descriptions. It is the "Little Sparrow" Bunting (*Spizella pusilla*), also from North America. The total length is less than five inches, of which over two inches are taken up by the tail. The general colour is rather bright brown with darker centres to the feathers, the under parts being decidedly paler; the very short conical beak and legs are pinkish. There seems to be no difference between the sexes. In my bird the right wing is almost entirely white, no doubt a case of albinism. Like the White-throated Song Sparrow he is very partial to mealworms. I have as yet observed no peculiarity in his habits.

* This habit of scratching like a Combassou is characteristic of the Song Sparrows, and therefore confirmatory of its position among the Buntings.—A. G. B.

THE GOLDEN-CROWNED PARRAKEET OF NEW ZEALAND.

(Cyanorhamphus auriceps).

By G. E. Bouskill.

Of all the Parrakeets I have kept, the subject of the present notice stands highest in my estimation.

Its amiable disposition, its lively and active habits, and its not unmusical voice, together with its soft colours, would attract all lovers of the Parrakeet family. In size, the Golden-crown compares favourably with the Turquoisine, but is much stouter in build; the beak is very long and sharp, and of a bluish-slate colour with a black tip, and the lower mandible dark brown. A band of bright crimson surrounds the upper ndible, which extends to the eye. From the band of crimson he crown of the head is a patch of golden yellow; the iris brilliant crimson; the back and the wings are of a dark h-green colour, and the front edges of the latter are a right blue; the tail is dark bluish-green; all the under parts are of a yellowish-green colour. On the body under each wing is a patch of bright red. The legs are long and grey; the claws long and black. There appears to be no difference in the sexes, except that the female is about a third smaller than her mate; at least, such is the difference in size between the one female and the male birds which I possess.

The habits of my Golden-crowned Parrakeets are very interesting. They are remarkably tame, and, although so recently imported, will come quite close to me while feeding. When first introduced into my aviary, hardly two months ago, they made themselves at home and behaved as if they had been there all their lives. The long legs of this bird enable it to run and hop with great freedom, and it has the peculiar habit of scratching on the ground, after the manner of our common poultry. It is never tired of either running, hopping, or flying about and uttering its song (if such it can be called), and at such times it will stretch itself out with a forward motion, and then it is that the Golden-crown really looks at its best. For while it is singing, the dilating of the eye goes on and the iris becomes like a ball of fire. They are particularly fond of their bath—they quite drench themselves through, and then fly to the nearest branch to dry. Although their beaks are so long and sharp, yet they are very gentle. My Turquoisines

and even Budgerigars frequently drive them away if they approach them whilst feeding.

During their short residence in my aviary one of the cocks has paired with the hen, and on the 24th October (exactly seven weeks after date of arrival) the hen bird laid her first egg; and on the 28th she was closely sitting on five pure white eggs.

If any young are reared, I will ask you to let me record the fact.

THE SONGS OF TANAGERS.

By Arthur G. Butler, Ph.D.

Dr. Carl Russ says of Tanagers:—"They have no true song, only low harsh unpleasant sounds," and, because he regards the Violet Tanager as an exception to this rule, adopts for it the name of "The Common Organist," "Whistler," yet he says that it is "decidedly not a super songster," although Mr. Abrahams pronounces it "a magnif songster."

Undoubtedly the renowned German aviculturist is, generally speaking, a very trustworthy guide in the treatment of birds; and what he tells us of their habits rightly commands our respect; but, when we consider that none of his Tanagers lived long; that, by his own admission, they were invariably dirty, greedy, and abominably stupid, it stands to reason that we must accept his statements respecting their vocal acquirements *cum grano salis*.

The Tanagers being intermediate in structure and in nidification between Finches and Warblers, it would be a curious fact, if it were a fact, that all, with the exception of the species of *Euphonia*, were songless.

A German lady, Mrs. A. Musil, stated that her Scarlet Tanager uttered "clear Thrush-like sounds and a beautiful soft song, rich in variations, somewhat resembling that of the Robin," and Dr. Russ quoted the statement with a note of interrogation, yet he does not appear to have attempted to investigate the matter for himself. When I have kept my two fine males long enough for them to become confiding, perhaps they will give me an opportunity of forming an opinion respecting the merit of their performance.

My Superb Tanager, which I purchased on May 28th, 1897, moulted into splendid plumage last autumn, and is, without

question, the healthiest and most intelligent representative of its species which I have hitherto seen. Soon after I became possessed of it, this bird, in addition to its bright excited chirp, uttered a number of harsh Weaver-like notes which I took to be its song; but, this morning (December 6th, 1897), when my birds were just beginning to rouse from their long winter-night's sleep,* I heard what sounded like the *recorded* song of the Indigo-Bunting (a bird which I do not at present possess); this was immediately followed by three excited chirps, which I at once recognized as uttered by the Superb Tanager.

The bird was sitting quietly at the end of his perch farthest from the front, and, as I watched, he again sang the same thin though cheerful little song, ending with the same chirping notes twice more; after which he stretched himself, first his legs and then his wings, hopped a little way along his upper perch, then flew to the lower one, and so down again to ma[illegible] food saucer, snatched a morsel of egg and returned to the to[illegible] perch to eat it; he is anything but a greedy bird. is a blu[illegible] h[illegible]

SOME BIRD-ROOM APPLIANCES.

By H. R. Fillmer.

Most aviculturists can only devote a strictly limited time each day to the care of their birds, and it therefore becomes almost a necessity for them to have such arrangements in their bird-rooms as will enable them to quickly perform the work of feeding and cleaning. In a bird-room well-stocked with proper appliances, attending to the birds is a pleasure; but in a bird-room where nothing can be found when it is wanted, and where every article in use is badly adapted for its purpose, the work soon becomes a weariness, and often, in the end, the birds are got rid of in disgust. My present purpose is to describe briefly some appliances which I have found useful, and which I can recommend to others.

Every bird-room should have an inner door, consisting of a wooden frame covered with wire netting—this allows the outer door to be left open for ventilation without risk of the escape of birds or the entrance of cats. For the same reason, the windows should be covered with netting, and also the opening of the

* I never provide my birds with a night-light to enable them to feed at night; it is, in my opinion, absolutely unnecessary for birds in captivity, which generally eat more than is good for them, and I would challenge anyone to show a better *Zosterops* an Lavender Finch than those which have lived for over three years in my charge.

fire-place. If the netting be placed outside the windows, the sashes can be raised and lowered just as if it were not there, but there is the risk that birds may injure themselves against the glass. There really ought to be netting both outside and inside, that on the inside being stretched on a light moveable framework. It is not safe to have it only inside, for you are sure, some day, to forget to replace the frame after opening the window, and then, if a bird escape from cage or aviary, off he goes!

A small sink in the bird-room is a great convenience, and those who have experienced the comfort of it would never be without one. The most suitable kind is made of earthenware, is nearly a foot in depth, and is furnished with a brass plug so that the water can be made to stand in it. If a supply of hot water as well as cold can be arranged, the soft-food vessels need not be taken out of the room to be cleaned. The wall behind the sink should be covered with glazed tiles or sheet lead, to protect it from the splashing of the water, (a piece of gutta percha tubing on the tap will minimise the splashing). If the food-vessels are washed in the room, there should be a draining-board at the side of the sink.

A small "sanitary dust-bin" is handy. Needless to say, it should be emptied daily.

There should be a large ventilator just under the ceiling, of the kind that can be opened and shut at will. Mine opens into the chimney, and is never shut. If it opened out-of-doors it might sometimes be necessary to shut it.

For food-vessels I prefer white earthenware, as it is stronger than glass. Jones's Fountains are far and away the best water-vessels, except for Parrots. A satisfactory water-vessel for Parrots has yet to be invented. Lories and Lorikeets I supply with water in soup-plates, for they require a bath at least once a day, whatever the weather may be.

I have used one of Clark's Syphon Gas Stoves in my bird-room for five winters. It is safe and very economical. So far as I can see, it has no injurious effect on the birds. I now have an atmospheric stove (No. 3), and find it gives more heat than those which give light as well as heat, and there is no chimney to break; but the heat cannot be quite so well regulated as it can with the kind more often used (i.e., that with an argand burner). This winter the temperature in my room has never fallen below 54°, and generally keeps at from 58° to 60°—and the gas is never full on. A pan of water should always

stand on the top of the stove, otherwise the air becomes unhealthily dry.

A net for catching birds in the aviary is indispensable. A common butterfly net does well enough; but the gauze should be replaced by light cotton netting.

If the aviaries are built in two tiers, one above the other, a short step-ladder will be useful for reaching the upper ones.

All seed should be kept in tins, and these should be arranged in an order which should never be varied—and you will then at once be able to find the seed you want, even in the dark.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CAGES *v.* AVIARIES.

SIR,—Mr. Fillmer says, "Will Mr. Dutton kindly tell us which are the birds that do better in a cage than in an aviary?"

Mr. Fillmer interprets me somewhat too positively. I only said, "Some birds might do better." In other words, I was merely suggesting a possibility. My idea is that all small and delicate birds, and birds which are fastidious about their food, are better in cages. I very much doubt its being possible to keep a Troupial in an aviary: they want so much attention about *special* warmth.* If I were asked to keep a Wren, I think I should prefer trying to keep it in a cage.†

But readers will kindly bear in mind how very limited my knowledge and experience is—almost confined to Parrots, and to many fewer of them than I could wish. All I can do is to throw out suggestions which may lead to successful results or may not.

F. G. DUTTON.

DEALERS' NAMES FOR BIRDS.

SIR,—Seeing the number of queries *re* names of birds, I think a list, giving the synonymy of the names of foreign birds, would be very valuable, as every dealer seems to have a name of his own. I, myself, am never sure that I am not buying something I have not already got, until I actually get the bird. Will not some *experienced* aviculturist oblige?

R. CREIGHTON.

[A letter to a similar effect has been received from Mr. ALEXANDER CUMMINGS.]

BREEDING IN AN OUTDOOR AVIARY.

SIR,—Considering that the year 1897 was my first trial of an outdoor aviary, and that my birds were not turned out until late in June, I am satisfied with the result.

---

* Mr. Dutton probably means a Hang-nest; for the Troupials (or "Meadow Starlings") are better kept in aviaries than in cages, although tamer in the latter.—A.G.B.

† See the letters by Mr. Bonhote and Mr. Marshall in this month's Magazine under the heading "Food for Soft-billed Birds."—ED.

I had two nests (five and three) of African Silver-bills, and two nests of Zebra Finches (three in each). The Silver-bills built a lovely solid nest in a gorse-bush. Chestnut Finches built three large globular nests, but laid no eggs. Bronze Mannikins built in a small cage, and laid three eggs, when I was obliged to take them in. St. Helenas, Red Avadavats, and Cordon Bleus had commenced nests. A hen Saffron Finch lined a cocoa-nut shell with fine hay, and laid three eggs, when the male bird near killed her, having already destroyed a pair of Green Singing Finches; so parted with them.

Three-coloured Nuns I find very meddlesome: they interfered greatly with domestic arrangements generally, sleeping in the newly-built nests one after the other.

The temperature was 42° when I took the birds in, all in perfect health and plumage.

Pekin Robins are out now. I hope to do better in 1898.

GRACE ASHFORD.

CONFUSION IN NAMING FOREIGN DOVES.

SIR,—In my letter which appeared in the last number of our Magazine, under the above heading, I mentioned *Turtur semitorquatus* as being slightly smaller than *T. risorius*: but in a foot-note Dr. Butler says that this is incorrect.

I must own to having been decidedly confused over the proper identification of the species.

A few years ago I had two pairs of African Doves, which, at first sight, might readily have been taken for Barbary Turtles. They were, however, slightly smaller, and the collar was somewhat broader than in the domestic species; the iris, moreover, which in *T. risorius* is bright red, was, in these birds, very dark.

I had not, at the time, the opportunity of examining the collection of skins in the British Museum; nor had I access to the Museum Catalogue: but when at the Zoological Gardens, I found the species labelled and figured as *T. semitorquatus*.

On referring to the Museum Catalogue, I find that the birds above referred to as being less in size than *T. risorius* correspond with the description of *T. vinaceus*; while *T. semitorquatus* is, apparently, the larger species referred to in my last letter as *T. vinaceus*.

Thus the nomenclature of the Doves at the "Zoo." differs from that at the British Museum, and the only safe plan is to refer to the Museum Catalogue for the identification of rare Doves.

The length of *T. vinaceus* is given by Salvadori as scarcely 10 inches; that of *T. senegalensis* as about 11 inches, and that of *T. semitorquatus* as 12·4 inches.

D. SETH-SMITH.

SIR,—In his note on this subject in the December part of the Magazine, Mr. Seth-Smith allows himself to be wholly guided by the names on the cages at the Gardens of the Zoological Society when he paid

his last visit. This is a mistake which, if adhered to, would lead to endless confusion.

It is well known that birds associated together in a cage or aviary will sometimes agree perfectly for weeks or years, and then, either because the breeding-season is at hand or because old age has made a bird disagreeable, it will attack every one of its associates (I have had an instance in one of my aviaries this year).

Supposing this happens at the Zoo, and an under-keeper is passing at the time, he will quickly remove the offender to a cage containing perhaps one bird, substituting the latter for the offender. For the time then, the labels on the cages are transposed, and a Green Bulbul becomes a Paradise Whydah or something equally absurd.

My pair of Half-collared Turtle Doves were selected from a series brought home by our member, Mr. Frank Finn, and deposited at the Zoological Society's Gardens; at his request the Society sent the birds to me.

Knowing what confusion had existed respecting the true *Turtur semitorquatus*, I spoke to Count Salvadori (who was then engaged upon the British Museum Catalogue of *Columbæ*) and he showed me our fine series of skins of *T. Senegalensis* and of *T. semitorquatus*, as well as *T. vinaceus*. *T. semitorquatus* is by far the larger bird; then comes *T. senegalensis*, about 11 inches; whilst *T. vinaceus* is barely 10 inches in total length.

A. G. Butler.

SEMI-DOMESTICATED MOORHENS.

Sir,—The article by Mr. C. L. Hett in the last issue was of great interest in revealing some of the habits of a most shy and interesting bird; they are still more interesting since they agree in one or two minute details with my observations on the breeding of the Corncrake, last year (1896). I have not at hand the number of the *Avicultural Magazine* in which my remarks appeared, but I remember distinctly passing over several of my notes, as I considered the habits to which they referred probably due to a life in confinement. Mr. Hett refers to the fact that the male bird kept away from the brood and took no notice of them during the first three days of their life; also that the male tended some of the chicks in one nest while the hen looked after the rest in another. The followiug are my notes on the subject.

16th July, 1896—"The Corncrake began to sit on July 6th. . . The male bird goes on as soon as she comes off."

22nd July—"The Corncrake has to-day hatched off all her young (8), after seventeen days incubation. *She will not allow the cock to interfere with them* or come near her."

26th July—"A marked change has come over the hen, who, instead of driving the cock away, *now allows him to brood the young*. . . . . They have not been seen going about together, but each has a few young."

A glance at these notes will shew that in these particulars, and during a time of greatest importance to the welfare of the species, the habits of these two species are practically the same. And although it may be argued that they belong to the same family, yet their modes of life, which

are always supposed to have the greatest influence in determining habits, are as divergent as can be: the one spending most of its time on water, the other inhabiting dry fields. It also tends to show that habits are by no means so transient and easily influenced by external circumstances as many suppose; but, at any rate, in this case they have been able to withstand the agents that have caused so great a divergence from the common ancestor of the two species.

Another point which has often puzzled me with regard to the Moorhen is the abundance of unused nests that are always found; undoubtedly some of them are built as landing-stages for the young, but Mr. Hett evidently believes that some are built by earlier broods, and it would be extremely interesting if he could another year ascertain the fact.

As regards bread as food for the young, I was much entertained one day this year in St. James's Park, by watching a Moorhen taking bread as it was thrown down, and coveying it to her young, who remained partially concealed in the rushes close by.

J. Lewis Bonhote.

FOOD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

Sir,—In the last issue, you invite correspondence on this most interesting subject, and this is my only excuse for burdening your space.

A few years ago I tried to keep many of our Warblers, and afterwards gave it up, as I came to the conclusion that not having means or suitable accommodation to keep them properly, it was better not to do so at all. For three or four years I always had a few by me, as I was determined, if possible, to find out the secret of success, and I only gave it up when I had satisfied myself that I had found out the secret, and that owing to practical conditions, it was impossible for me to carry it out. "First catch your hare and then cook it," is a golden rule for most people, but the exception to it is found in aviculture, where it is all-important to learn the rudiments of how to keep a bird before catching it. I will, therefore, pass over the great question of "meating off" a fresh-caught bird,* or the other alternative of hand-rearing—to which practice I am, personally, strongly opposed.

The first point to consider is that of cage *versus* aviary. During our winter, the Warblers do much better in a large and roomy box-cage, with not less than two or more than four in a cage. The reason is, not because the birds keep in better health, but that they can be under closer observation, and the delicacies more evenly divided. Besides which, a bird may be to all appearances well in the morning and dead in the afternoon; in an aviary it would not be noticed, or if noticed, the excitement of catching it would probably place it beyond hope of recovery. The next point is, where should the cage or cages be kept? An ordinary living-room is too hot by day and too cold in the early morning, and, to make a long story short, the only place is a room devoted solely to birds, with good ventilation and a fairly constant temperature.

In writing these notes, I would impress on my readers that individual birds have thriven under very different circumstances, but these notes a

* For rough details on "meating off," see article on the "Spotted Flycatcher," in No. 5 of the *Avicultural Magazine*, March, 1895.

intended to apply where a number of birds are kept, and to all individuals of our British summer *Sylviidæ*, weakly or robust.

As regards food.—The only satisfactory staple food that I have been able to discover is hard boiled egg and ants' eggs, in equal parts, served fresh twice a day. The egg should be run through a wire sieve and then mixed with the ants' eggs. About twice a week, scraped raw beef should be given, and on those days, instead of the egg and ants' eggs, give bread soaked in milk, with the milk well squeezed out, and mixed with about a third of its bulk of hempseed well crushed and pounded. Each bird should have at least five mealworms a day, or other live food. Green meat and fruit should also be given, and will be relished by some but not by all. The only drawback to this food is that it is liable to become too fattening. The first symptom of this is, probably, that the bird has a slight fit; when this is the case, stop the egg, give him ants' eggs damped in milk, and a little scraped beef and plenty of green food, but do not feed too well.

During the winter, if a light be not left in the room, they should have a last feed at night. Drop some mealworms into the food-dish and they will soon feed. A bath, twice a week at least, is essential.

If this method should be followed, I am sure there are few or no birds that will not keep in the pink of health and condition, but it may well be questioned whether birds that need such care are worth the trouble of keeping. I can only say that, if one's purse is long enough and one has sufficient spare time, few birds would better repay the care, both in their song, tame dispositions, and enticing ways; but there can be no half-measures, and a couple of days' neglect is sufficient to induce many to start on their last journey.

J. Lewis Bonhote.

Sir,—The *Gefiederte Welt* mentions that Dr. Russ kept a Tui for over two years on the following food: Ants' cocoons and grated carrot, mixed: besides daily a little piece of biscuit soaked in milk, now and then a little sweet fruit or a teaspoonful of honey, also a little scraped raw meat.

In the Zoological Garden of Berlin the Tui is fed upon Tanager-food; this bird has lived there four years.

I feed my Tuis in the same way as Tanagers, Spectacle-birds, Warblers and similar birds, and, I make bold to say, with the greatest success: fresh sweet cheese or curdle, a little preserved yolk of egg, ants' cocoons, grated stale bread or biscuit, grated raw carrot or carrot-meal, mixed; now and then banana or other sweet fruit.

The fresh cheese is much easier digested by all these birds than boiled egg and meat; it is made by mixing fresh milk, one quart, with rennet, three teaspoonsful, keeping it for a little while in a temperature of 80 to 90 degrees and boiling it afterwards. Mixed with some good dried ants' cocoons, I consider it to be a good substitute for fresh ants' cocoons.

The great success which places the Austrians in front of all other nations in keeping soft-billed birds is due, I believe, in a great extent, to the free use of fresh sweet cheese.

Through my persuasion, the late Mr. Erskine Allon tried feeding his Shâmas on fresh cheese-food, and he assured me many times that these birds were thriving splendidly upon it.

I cannot believe that Tuis or any other birds could be kept a long time on mashed potatoes and sugar without becoming anæmic, as potatoes contain so little nitrogen, but plenty of carbon; even biscuit or bread soaked on milk as the staple food would not give them sufficient nitrogen; therefore I prefer to use the above-mentioned cheese-food, which contains plenty of nitrogen, is very easily digested, and will not produce too much fat.

R. MASCHKE.

SIR,—Some time since I had a little talk with Mr. Abrahams on this subject, and he told me that his experience of the Tui-bird and other honey-eaters was that they could not be kept for any length of time either on honey or condensed milk.

At the same time it was a great mistake to suddenly remove the food upon which any bird had been imported and give it that which was suitable as a permanency: this change must be effected gradually: thus, if Tui-birds reached him which had been fed on condensed milk, he gradually added his insectivorous food and potatoes or breadcrumbs until he had accustomed them to the drier food, when he gave no more of the sweet laxative mess, and got the birds into a healthy condition.

In the case of Tanagers, of which I have two species,—the Superb and the Scarlet,—oranges are the favourite food in a wild state; yet during the winter, when oranges are usually more or less acid, I find that my Scarlet Tanagers will not touch them, but eat my soft food mixture greedily, and make up with banana; the Superb Tanager eats a little soft food, always beginning upon the yolk of egg, a little orange and a good deal of banana. As regards condition, I think all who have seen my birds will admit that they are fit to compete at any show—a trial to which I shall *not* subject them.

My *Zosterops*, which I have had for some years, prefers grapes or apple to orange during the winter-time, but feeds chiefly upon soft food at this season and is in the pink of condition. My mixture consists of stale bread, potato, egg, ants' cocoons and Abrahams' food.

I find that Tanagers prefer cockroaches to mealworms, but they sometimes accept the latter.

A. G. BUTLER.

SIR,—In response to your request for information as to "Food for soft-billed birds" I am glad to give you the following particulars of the manner in which my own birds are fed.

For the staple food which is supplied to the aviaries, and the less delicate of the British and foreign "soft-bills," I take equal parts, in bulk, of the finest ants' cocoons procurable, "dried flies," Osborne biscuits ground to powder, and Spratts' fine-ground crissel: this mixture keeps indefinitely. Each morning a portion of this is taken, and made up to double its bulk by the addition of breadcrumbs, hard-boiled egg, and boiled potatoes; or bread-crumbs, egg, and grated raw carrot. The coarser birds, such as Thrushes, Blackbirds, Shamas, and the like, would thrive perfectly upon a larger proportion of bread and potato, while the more delicate ones are better with less bread. I may anticipate enquiries by stating that I get the "dried flies" from Maggs Bros., of Swansea, at 1/- per lb. The ants' cocoons ar

imported directly for me from Austria at 30/- the five kilo bag (about ten pounds). Until I discovered these latter I was using Roman's ants' cocoons, but as this firm would not sell them in bulk, only supplying them in shilling tins, which makes them come out, even at wholesale price, at 6/- per lb., I was very glad to find a sample nearly or quite as good at half the price. I believe the one secret in feeding insectivorous birds is to give as many ants' cocoons as one can afford, and *only* of the best quality; cheap ants' cocoons are about as valuable for food as chopped straw. The ideal food of all is *fresh* ants' cocoons, but these are of course only obtainable by those, or from those, who know how to take them, and then only through the summer. On the Continent they are sold during the season by all bird dealers, and I should think they would prove a most remunerative "line" in England. The process of taking these cocoons is a most interesting one, and one day I will write an article explaining it.

The food as above will be found to suit all but the most delicate of the insectivorous birds, for there still remain some which would not eat, or could not digest, the biscuit and breadcrumbs. Among the latter may be classed the Nightingale, the various Warblers, and the Long-tailed Tit. As I have a Long-tailed Tit which I have twice cage-moulted, and as I believe it to be the only specimen of its kind which has ever been kept in a cage for more than a few days, perhaps a short account of my experience with this individual bird may be of interest, as being indicative of the troubles accidental to the keeping in captivity of the more delicate kinds of insectivorous birds. I bought him at the "first feather" show of the L. & P. O. S. in 1896, and had no particular trouble with him until his first moult. His food was scalded ants' cocoons and yolk of freshly-boiled egg, supplemented by mealworms, flies, and such small insects as we could capture for him—house-flies were a particular dainty which he would always take from one's finger. When he was deep in his first moult I was daily expecting to lose him, but he pulled through with a plentiful supply of live insects, and everything went well until the past autumn, when he went into his second moult. Then we had a very serious time with him, and even now he has not quite recovered "show condition." When at his worst he would not touch even scalded ants' cocoons, and was kept alive by feeding from th fingers with live flies, spiders and other small insects. At one time he was so weak that as a desperate resource we poured small doses of strong beef-tea down his throat, and I really think the bird's preservation is due to the "exhibition" of this "unnatural food." At the time of writing he is in perfect health, and I confidently hope to show him at the forthcoming Palace Show.

My Nightingales, Warblers and Swallows have only scalded ants' cocoons, yolk of egg and live insects.

Such birds as Tanagers, Zosterops, Sugar-birds and Lories do perfectly well with me upon sponge cake soaked in boiled milk and sweetened with sugar or honey, together with a daily supply of fresh fruit: the favourite fruits being bananas and oranges. Some of these birds will eat mealworms and scalded ants' cocoons; others refuse them.

I have not mentioned birds which feed on raw meat. I have in my collection three species of birds, the Greater Grey-backed Shrike, the La Plata Cuckoo, and the European Roller, which I cannot get to eat anything but raw meat; and if any member can suggest a less objectionable food I shall be grateful.

HENRY J. FULLJAMES.

SIR,—I feed my soft-bills chiefly on Gasparin's Food. My Whinchat, now nearly three years old, has always been fed entirely on it, and she has taken numerous prizes at Shows. Besides the Whinchat, I have used it for feeding Blackcaps, White-throats, Robins, Redstarts, Wheatears, and Pekin Robins, but I find that Nightingales, Chiffchaffs, and Wagtails do not care for it.

I take a shilling packet of Gasparin's, add to it one third its bulk of dry ants' eggs, and, having mixed it well, take as much as will last for one day and make it quite moist with boiling water. On three days in the week I add to it, when cold, either watercress, lettuce, or the leaves of groundsel chopped very fine,—as I find that the soft-billed birds do not otherwise eat green food, which I consider good for them.

When I first began to keep soft-bills I tried dried flies, yolk of egg, and more than one advertised mixture; but I found that the birds did not look so healthy upon any of them as they do upon what I now give them, and I consider it more economical.

As a rule, I give six to eight mealworms a day to each bird, but some birds take more. My Robin, which I have had for three years, has only three a day, as, if he gets more, he has fits. As I consider the mealworm heating, I generally give them the first thing in the morning, about nine, and feed with Gasparin's about ten and again about five.

On their return from Shows, and about once a month, when at home, I give my birds six to ten drops of extract of *Cascara Sagrada* in the drinking-water, as I find they will drink that—and it is so difficult to give castor oil. As a rule, I keep them separately in box-cages, 20 inches by 12 inches, not being able to have aviaries, except for Wagtails. I find the Blackcaps and Whinchats are very fond of a little piece of cooked fish.

E. L. HOPWOOD.

Gasparin's food I consider to be an excellent preparation, and I am now giving my foreign soft-bills a mixture of it with Abrahams' Preserved Egg, and soaked ants' eggs, in about equal proportions. This seems to form a nourishing and wholesome food which they all eat readily, and with bananas and apples, and biscuit or sponge cake made into a crumbly paste with boiled milk, constitutes their regular diet. I am not at all sure whether the preserved egg might not with advantage be omitted.

My Ceram Lory lives on biscuit soaked in boiled milk (made rather sloppy) and stewed apple. The Lorikeets have their biscuit much more solid, and usually have bananas and raw apple instead of stewed apple.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

[We should be glad of many more letters upon this subject, as we should like to have the benefit of the experience of every member who has successfully kept soft-bills for years. The treatment adopted by many will doubtless be much the same as that described in some of the letters we have already published, but the evidence will not be the less valuable on that account.]

THE GREEN AVADAVAT.

SIR,—I am this year testing the hardiness of several species that I have not previously tried in an open air aviary during the winter. Of these I have, perhaps, been most interested in the Green Avadavat, in view of the different opinions held on the point by high authorities. As far as the riment has yet gone, the opinion expressed by Dr. Butler, in his eign Finches in Captivity," is fully confirmed. We have already had od deal of cold weather here, and several nights of sharp frost; not y have these birds not suffered, but one morning with the thermometer owing ten degrees of frost, I noticed them in the open flight of their aviary, flying briskly about and evidently rather enjoying the bitter air than otherwise. Of course this, like my other aviaries, has a house for the birds to retire to at night or when they desire shelter. A hen Blue Grosbeak, in an adjoining aviary, seems also quite indifferent to frost. I fancy that farther experiment will prove many birds, usually considered delicate, able to withstand as much frost as we usually experience in this country; but, of course, the aviary should be in a position as far as possible sheltered from cold winds, and communicate with a house or shed to give shelter from wet. The principle danger is, probably, the liability of hens to become egg-bound during the cold months. It would certainly be advisable to separate the sexes during the winter.

R. A. TODD.

BREEDING RESULTS FOR 1897.

SIR,—I have been looking forward to seeing reports of the breeding results of members of the Society for 1897. My own aviaries are rather too crowded to admit of great results in this branch of aviculture. I have, however, not been altogether unsuccessful.

Zebra Finches.—Fourteen reared, and as many or more not reared. I cannot fathom the reason why so many are thrown out of the nest by the parents before they are fledged, unless it is that in a confined space the different pairs interfere too much with each other's proceedings. I give hardly any mealworms in the summer, but a fair supply of egg-food and ants' eggs, and plenty of green food and flowering grass. I am also extremely careful never to approach the neighbourhood of the nests. The first brood was hatched during the sharp spell of frost in January, when the thermometer fell on one night to 17° F. The nest was built in thick ivy in the open flight of the aviary; two birds were hatched, but only one was reared.

Ribbon Finches.—Five reared, and in this case also several not reared. It is curious that I have only bred one hen in the last three years. These birds I also keep in an outdoor aviary.

Bengalese.—One reared and one not reared. Whatever they may do kept in separate pairs in cages, these birds will certainly not breed freely n aviary. Their habit of packing together in the same nest is not conive to the rearing of young.

Long-tailed Finches.—Three reared. The young birds, nearly four nths old, are now hardly distinguishable from their parents.

Hybrid between Bronze Mannikin and Rufous-backed Mannikin.—Five reared. These are very similar to the latter (the male parent), but are generally duller in colour, with the white and black marking on the wings

less distinct. A pair of these have now mated, and are building a nest, but according to all rules the eggs should not be fertile.

Parson Finches.—As usual, my pair has nested repeatedly all through the season, but never hatched out. I have had this pair for three years, and they have never got beyond eggs, though an undoubted pair.

Cherry Finches.—Nested twice with no result.

Red-crested Cardinal.—Two nests and three young in each, w[hich] were thrown out and killed before they were a fortnight old. The old [birds] have a constant supply of cockroaches and a good many caterpillars, [and a] very few mealworms,

Green Cardinal.—One nest, and three eggs which were not hatched.

Magpie Mannikin.—Their first nest was filled with eggs which were constantly incubated, either the cock or the hen being always on the nest, but never hatched. Several nests have been built since, and immediately pulled to pieces again, and no eggs laid.

I have noticed an egg dropped occasionally in my Weaver aviary, but none of the occupants have ever made any serious attempt to nest.

R. A. Todd.

TANAGERS, RUFOUS-TAILED GRASSFINCHES, AND DUFRESNE'S WAXBILLS.

Sir,—As Tanagers are usually considered rather difficult birds to keep, perhaps my experience may be of some interest. Even Dr. Russ, in Vols. I. and II. of his great work, "Die Fremdländischen Stubenvögel," does not speak favourably of these birds in any respect, except their beauty. I had, therefore, never contemplated the possibility of keeping a Tanager, though I had often admired their brilliant appearance in Dr. Russ' books. However, on seeing several species mentioned in Mr. Abrahams' list last October, I wrote to enquire about them, and by his advice I selected a Superb Tanager (*Calliste fastuosa*). I received a beautiful specimen in perfect plumage, and put him at once in my aviary-cage with about thirty-six small Waxbills, Finches, Weavers, Mannikins and a pair of Grey-backed Australian Spectacle Birds (*Zosterops lateralis*). Mr. Abrahams told me the Tanager would eat the same food as the Spectacle Birds, *i.e.*, preserved yolk of egg mixed with potato finely grated, Mr. Abrahams' Insectivorous Food, and ripe fruit. I give the Tanager three or four mealworms daily, which I drop into his food-tin to ensure his securing them, as he does not appear to like the floor of the cage. He was rather shy at first, but now watches me so closely during the process that I think he will soon take them from my hand.

Dr. Russ describes this bird as being dull and voracious. The specimen in my possession is always lively, and certainly does not eat more than his companions. My cage is cleaned daily, but I do not find that the Tanager necessitates any extra trouble in that line, and he is quite peaceable with the other birds, suffering a tiny Orange-cheek Waxbill to snatch away a mealworm before his eyes. On the whole, he prefers the egg and potato to the insectivorous food: unlike my Shâma, who refuses to touch anything else (except mealworms); and, during the three years I have had him, he has thriven and sung splendidly on that food alone.

I quite agree with Mr. Todd about the peaceable disposition of the Rufous-tailed Grassfinch (*Bathilda ruficauda*). I bought a pair nearly two

years ago, which I was told had just gained 1st prize at the Crystal Palace, and they have never attempted to molest any other birds. Last year they showed an inclination to nest, so I put them in a separate cage, but they devoured their eggs as soon as they were laid.

I have had a cock Dufresne's Waxbill, who came from Mr. Abrahams year ago, and he has always been very healthy. His only drawback love of having his neck plucked by the other birds, and he is always g to obtain that pleasure. I got another cock this spring, from Mr. on's collection, but unfortunately he slipped out of the aviary-cage the of his arrival, without my perceiving his escape, and next morning he was found dead in the drawing-room underneath the window, having probably flown against the plate-glass.

C. A. Hodgson.

FOREIGN BIRD NOTES.

Sir,—I well remember with what pleasure I received my first cage of foreign birds (Java Sparrows), brought home by a coloured sailor on one of the tea ships. About the same time, I had sent me a book on foreign birds, and with it a list from a foreign-bird dealer. Perhaps it might be interesting to the readers of the *Avicultural Magazine* to compare some of the prices of thirty years ago (1867) and the prices of to-day. The following are some of the prices in this list:—Java Sparrows, Cutthroat or Coral-necked Sparrows, Silverbeaks, 10/- pair; Amandava or Avadavat, African Waxbills, Black- and White-headed Mannikins, Combassou Birds, Weaver Birds, 12/- pair; Australian Waxbills, 20/- pair; Brisbane Finch, 30/- pair; Australian or Rockhampton Finches (the Banded, Grass and Chestnut-breasted Finch) 30/- to 60/- pair; Negro Finch, 20/-; Nonpareil, 20/-; Popes, 20/-; Red-crested Cardinal, 25/-; Grand Bishop Birds, 30/-; Saffron Finch, 12/-; Whydah Bird, 15/- *each*; Budgerigars or Grass Parrakeets, 30/- pair; Cockatiels, 40/- pair; the Rose-hill and Pennant Parrakeets (sometimes called Lories) 40/- to 60/- each; Indian Mina Bird, from £4 to £10 each; Mackaw, £5 each; Ring-necked Bengal Parrakeets, 40/-; and Australian King Parrots, £5 each.

Since then, some of the birds I have kept have come to me in rather strange ways. Some ten years ago, a very fine Blue-fronted Amazon Parrot flew into one of the windows of a Girls' Orphanage in South London. Some of the girls, with sticks and brooms, tried to drive it away; when they drove it from one window it flew to another. Pollie would not be driven away—it being an Orphan Home, she had come to stay. When I went to see her, poor Pollie was tied to the leg of a table in one corner of the room. We made every enquiry, but could not find the owner. I had the pleasure of taking it home as a present for my wife. It took several prizes, was a very fair talker, and one of the tamest Parrots I ever kept.

At another time, a driver of one of Carter Paterson's vans called and ired if I had lost what he thought was a large Black Crow which talked: d caught it in the neighbourhood. It proved to be a large Vasa Parrot, y tame bird. He offered it to me at a very low price; I promised, pro- g he could not find the owner, to purchase it, which eventually I did.

Walking down the East End one day, I was looking at the cages of birds piled up outside one of the bird-shops; amongst them, in a small cage, were two birds which, at first, I took to be a pair of Great Tits. I

asked the man outside what birds they were, and the price. (I had recognised them as being a pair of White-eared Bulbuls). He said they were Prussian Bullfinches, good singers, and he thought they were worth "'arf-a-crown each." I purchased them at that price; they soon improved in plumage, and, before long, were quite in show condition.

One cage of birds came to me from North Queensland, in ra strange way. Some twelve years ago, two brothers were in my employ; emigrated to Australia. The elder one is quite a naturalist in every Perhaps I might quote one or two extracts from his letters; he writ "This part (North Central Queensland), with its iron-bark forests a rolling plains, is quite a paradise for a naturalist. We have an abundance of Kangaroos and Wallabies, also Emus, Cassowaries, Scrub and Plain Turkeys, Wood and Whistling Ducks, Swamp Pheasants, Cockatoos, Black and White Magpies, Leather-heads, Blue Mountain Lories and other kinds of Parrots, Fan-tail Flycatchers, a strange bird called by the settlers More-pork, something like an Owl, (at night when out hunting it says distinctly 'more pork,' whence comes its name), all kinds of Pigeons and pretty Doves, plenty of Laughing Jackasses which make a great deal of noise when attacking the carpet Snake (I saw five of them a few days since attacking a large Iguana, three feet long: they flew in rapid succession one after the other past the Lizard, each and every one giving a tremendous blow with the beak on the head, until the Iguana was killed). . . . The trappers have caught a large flight of eight hundred Blue Mountain Lories; they migrate West from here at this time of the year (April, 1896). I have picked out thirty to send to you for your Blue Mountain aviary at Sydenham, all the rest will be sent down to Brisbane and shipped on a China boat for Hong Kong; when just caught they are fed chiefly on canary seed; they are a lovely sight." (I am sure they must have been, for the twenty-one that reached me, in splendid plumage, were quite a living picture; they became so tame that they would come down on my arms and shoulders like a flock of tame Pigeons). "Also seven Pink-cheeks, which were caught in the nets, I am sending." (Five reached me; these were Musky Lorikeets; a pair of them took honours at the Brighton and Aquarium Shows when exhibited by Mr. Maxwell; they were the finest pair I ever saw.

Another letter says, "I want to send you some rare Finches, some are very pretty. Farther North I am told there are some as yet unnamed; these are found in a locality where the Blacks are, who have a very bad name. I hope to send you some *Painted, Blood (Crimson), Double-bars (Bichenos), Star (Rufous-tailed Grass), Black-throats (Parson), and Gouldian Finches," and a name I could not quite make out. I wrote saying I should like to have the birds he had mentioned. In due time a letter came saying he had sent me a number of birds, including thirteen of the strange-named Finch, as I thought. When the boat arrived I was very anxious to see the new birds; I made enquiries of the man who brought them home; he said had lost only one on the voyage, the others were all right. To my surp the cage contained twelve Pectoral Rails (*Rallus pectoralis*) in finest dition. I was somewhat disappointed at not receiving Finches, alth pleased with the Rails, as they were new birds to me, most beauti marked, and a good addition to my aviaries.

JAMES B. HOUSDEN.

* *Emblema picta.*

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

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The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 6 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable. Each advertisement should be written on a separate sheet of paper, with the name and address of the advertiser at the foot.*

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THE

Avicultural Magazine.

BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. IV.—No. 40. *All rights reserved.* FEBRUARY, 1898.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2 6. The *Aviculs Magazine* is sent free to members monthly.

The Secretary begs to remind members that their annual scriptions became due on the 1st of November. They will greatly o him by remitting the amount (5/-) to him as soon as possible, and t save him the trouble of making individual applications by letter. Th members who subscribe for the coloured plates should remit the special subscription at the same time.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

The Magazine is published by Messrs. Betts & Sons, Limited, of 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., and is dispatched by them monthly to the members. Orders for extra copies, back numbers, and bou volumes should be addressed to them and not to the Secretary.

Cases for binding Vol. III. can be obtained from Messrs. B & Sons, Ltd., price 1s. 3d. each. They will be forwarded post f and carefully packed. A remittance must accompany the orde

As has been previously announced, it is intended to issue, this year, a series of at least four hand-coloured plates, similar in style to those which appeared last year. The first plate of the series appeared in December. Members who wish for these *coloured* plates will be asked to pay an extra subscription of 5/-, and, as an additional privilege, will have all their Magazines dispatched by letter-post, and protected by a sheet of straw-board. If the funds of the Society permit, additional plates will be issued without further charge.

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The Society's medal has been awarded by the Executive Committee to Mr. GEORGE E. BOUSKILL, for breeding *Cyanorhamphus auriceps* for first time in this country.

Dr. BUTLER would be much obliged to any members of the So who would forward dead specimens of any birds, *with perfect wings*, t private address; as he is studying sexual differences, with the obje assisting aviculturists to sex their birds with certainty.

With this number of the Magazine there is sent to each memb copy of a pamphlet prepared under the direction of the Council of the Avicultural Society at the request of the R.S.P.C.A., and which is published by the last named Society. Members who wish for extra copies can obtain them from the Hon. Sec. of the Avicultural Society.

(Continued on page 3 of cover).

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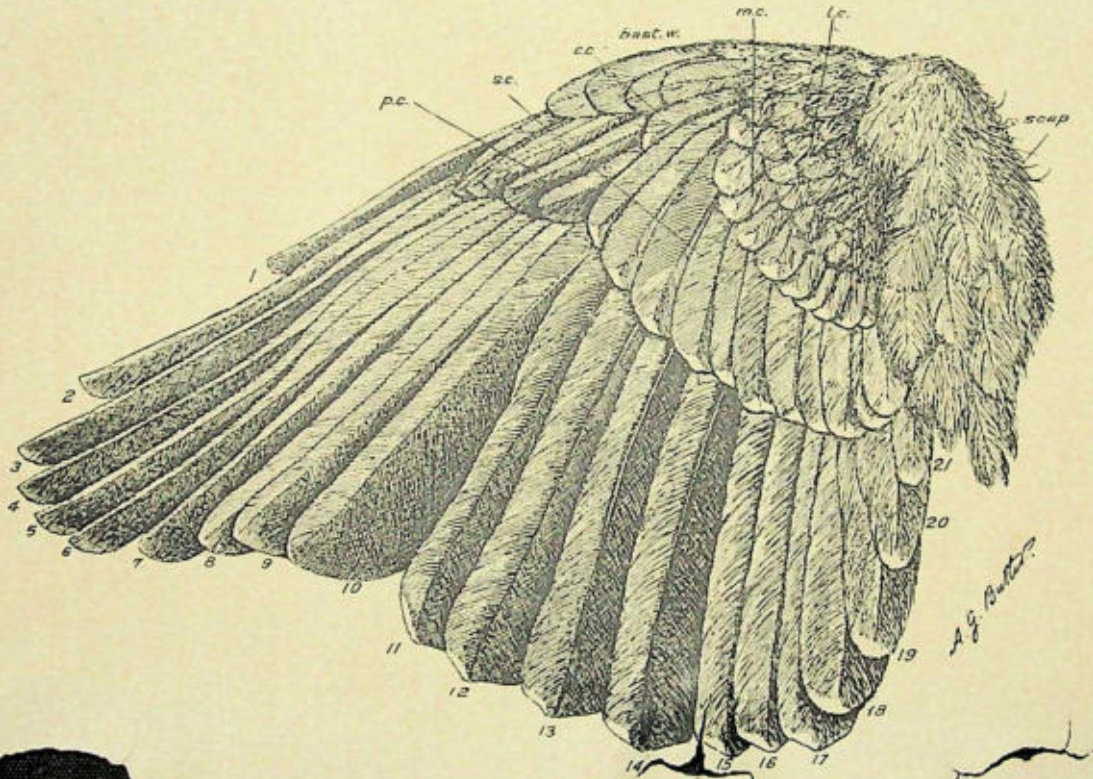
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WING OF *Ælurœdus crassirostris*. (AN AUSTRALIAN BOWER-BIRD.)

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THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. IV. NO. 40. *All rights reserved.* FEBRUARY, 1898.

A BIRD'S WING.

By Arthur G. Butler, Ph.D.

Some of the members of our Society have expressed a wish for a drawing of the wing of a bird with an explanation of its parts, to enable them to follow intelligently the descriptions of species which appear from time to time in our pages. Our Secretary asked me if I would undertake the work, which of course I willingly agreed to, being only too happy to be permitted to do what little I can towards the advancement of knowledge in this branch of our hobby.

The simplest plan would have been to prepare a mere outline map of some full-feathered species; but it occurred to me that it is not always easy for anyone with a map before him to recognize the corresponding feathers in an actual specimen, owing to their frequent displacement in sickly or dead birds, and to the absence of sharply-defined lines, due to their fringed ends and compact arrangement: I therefore determined to make a detailed drawing of an actual wing, and I consulted with Mr. Grönvold (a very talented taxidermist and draughtsman) as to the most suitable subject for my illustration. This gentleman kindly selected and lent me the wing of an Australian Bower-bird, *Ailuræedus crassirostris*, in which the ends of the chief feathers are rendered prominent by white terminal spots, and which will serve as a good typical model.

The quill-feathers of the wing separate into two well-defined series—primaries and secondaries, and serve much the same purpose as the front and hind wings of a butterfly (which have consequently received the same names, the front-wings being called primaries and the hind-wings secondaries). The first primary (fig. 1) is often very short and may be easily overlooked in some families by superficial observers. It has been called 'bastard primary' by Seebohm and many other writers;

but this is a most misleading term, inasmuch as it implies that the feather does not originate from the same part of the wing-framework as the remainder of the primaries, whereas it certainly does.

If the coverts are carefully removed from the under surface of a Skylark's wing, the tiny first primary will be seen projecting from the tip of the index finger of the hand (*manus*), and in exactly the same plane as the nine large primaries which follow it; all the primaries in fact originate from the inner border of the hand, the thumb (*pollex*) alone being reserved to support the bastard-wing,—a group of stiff feathers which strengthen the front of the wing from the bend forwards.

As in the wing selected for illustration, ten is a frequent number for the primary quills; but, when great sweep of wing is required, an extra primary and several additional secondaries are often found; and, in not a few families, only nine primaries are said to exist.*

In the wing before us the secondaries (11-21) are eleven in number. These quills are attached to the front of the fore-arm (*ulna*); the inner ones, which are graded and therefore readily recognizable in my illustration, are in some groups elongated; so that, by careless observers, they are apt to be confused with the outer scapularies. The latter represent a mass of soft feathers (analogous to the wing-lappets (*pterygodes*) of butterflies) which proceed from the hinder division of the arm (*humerus*), and strengthen the base of the wing.

In the closed wing the innermost secondary is on the surface, and thence to the first primary each overlaps the feather in front of it; this is also the case with the greater coverts, the innermost secondary covert (s. c.) being on the surface, though partly overlapped by the outermost scapularies: the innermost primary covert (p. c.) is necessarily overlapped by the outermost secondary and its covert, otherwise the free movement of the wing would be obstructed.

Situated between the two groups of greater coverts, but terminating half-way between the tips of the median and greater coverts, a white-tipped feather will be noticed (in many birds there are two of these feathers varying somewhat in the method of their emission); this is probably emitted from the skin which covers the *ulnar carpal* bone of the hand, and is known as a carpal covert. These feathers are rarely mentioned in descrip-

* The fifth primary starts from the phalanx of the third and last digit.

tions, and are very likely to be mistaken for a portion of the bastard wing, or even for primary coverts.

If the median and lesser coverts are removed from the front of a Skylark's wing, it will be seen that all the greater secondary coverts originate inside and at the base of the quills which they overlap; the primary coverts seem to me (though I may be in error) to originate between the quills and to be directed obliquely to the front of them.

The median coverts (m. c.), represented in our illustration by the inner series of white-tipped smaller feathers, and the lesser coverts (l. c.), which clothe the basal portion of the wing, are arranged in a reverse direction to the greater coverts (s.c. and p. c.), the outermost feathers being on the surface, so that the order of overlapping is in the opposite direction; but, it must be remembered, when examining skins and even living birds, that the lesser coverts, being small and soft, get easily disarranged; moreover, I have often seen a bird, when preening its feathers, pluck out and fling away a refractory covert which would not take its proper place; it is therefore not unusual to find more or less confusion as regards the relative position of these tiny details of plumage. The number of rows of lesser coverts varies not a little, the Doves being most liberally supplied in this respect.

The terminology of the feathered areas on the body is, for the most part, readily comprehended, but there are one or two terms which may prove puzzling, such as the '*lores*' or feathers between the upper mandible and the eye, the '*ear-coverts*'—a patch of feathers covering the ear and often well-defined in colour (as in the Song-Thrush), the '*axillaries*' — feathers covering the arm-pit and placed below and at the base of the wing; when the latter is extended they stand slightly away from the surface of the body, and look like a continuation of the scapularies carried under the wing.

PARROT NOTES.

By the Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton.

(*Continued from page 21*).

MACAWS.—(*Continued*).

The Editor has been good enough to ask me to continue my observations on Parrots. But one subject should be completed at a time. We have not finished the Macaws. Someone must be able to tell us something about the Crimson and Green, and the

Military Macaws. However, while waiting for those, we might take the smaller race of Macaws. I hardly expect any one will tell us anything about Spix's, but there remain the Severe Macaw, the Noble Macaw, and Illiger's.

I do not know that I could distinguish the Severe and Noble Macaws without a book to help me, but Illiger's is much smaller: it is, I suppose, the smallest Macaw. About this I can say one or two words, and Mr. Cresswell will, I hope, supplement what I have to say with a few notes on one now in his possession. And, as he has the living bird before him, I will leave to him the description of the plumage.

I digress here to say that, talking of the description of Parrots, anyone who devotes himself to Parrots should not fail to have the British Museum Catalogue of Parrots. It is simply invaluable for identifying them.

The first time I saw an Illiger's Macaw was somewhere about 1860, in the Pantheon. I suppose there are few who recollect the old Pantheon. It was like the Soho Bazaar, but to my mind far more attractive. And then one entrance (the entrance from Great Marlborough Street, I think,) was a long glass-roofed vestibule, rising by steps to a circular space with a fountain in the middle, round which were the Parrots. The Pantheon proper was entered by a door to the right of the fountain. The whole vestibule was given up to plants and birds. Chained to a perch, close to the fountain, was a delightfully tame little Macaw. I longed to buy him, but I suppose I had not room for him, or that Mr. Isaacs and myself could not come to terms, for he did not become mine.

Well, that Illiger didn't come off. But I had a friend whose brother had a West Indian Estate, and who sent him lots of Parrots, and those rare ones—alas! thirty-eight were once lost in one wreck! Amongst others, my friend had an Illiger sent him, and I took care of it for him. But I cannot say that it was tame, nor did it talk; it left me with the idea that I might very well leave Illiger's Macaw alone for the future, as not being likely to realise my ideal. It is only since my experience of other Macaws has shown me how great the Macaws' powers of talking are, and how affectionate they may be, that I have reconsidered the question. And now, were I to have an empty cage, and I saw a very tame Illiger, and particularly if that Illiger were to say a word or two, I might buy it. I say, "if it said a word or two," for in Illiger's Macaw I am sure sex would be all important. I very much doubt the hens talking at all.

At any rate, Mr. Cresswell has an Illiger which does talk, and, if he will be kind enough to tell our Society about it, I think we shall have some idea of the merits of the species as a cage-bird.

ILLIGER'S MACAW.

By O. E. Cresswell.

I formerly had a prejudice against all Macaws; I can't tell why, probably because they screamed and sometimes prevented me from enjoying the sight of other Parrots. I thought I never would have a Macaw, but fate decreed otherwise.

In 1893 I was at Antwerp; there, in the Zoo, where most of the birds are on sale, were several Illiger's Macaws, each in a rather dreary pen-like cage. The servant, who at home has chief care of my foreign birds, was with me, and reported that amongst these Illigers was a very interesting bird which he hoped I would buy. Certainly the bird had taken a great fancy to him, and seemed to extend this affection to myself; but I regretfully refused to buy any more birds—I had already with me Doves from Voss's establishment at Cologne, and had just bought a Redrump, which, I am glad to say, is still close by me as I write. I could hardly descend at hotels with more boxes of birds! The poor Illiger seemed to implore us to take him, and despairingly called "cockie" as I left the house. I had learnt that there evidently might be character in an Illiger; it is, too, I believe, quite the smallest of about thirty known varieties of Macaws, and this is an advantage. For those who have never seen one, I may say that in body the Illiger is about the size of a Grey Parrot, though, from its long tail, it looks larger. The face has the bare skin of most of the Macaws; over the beak is a scarlet diadem; the general body-colour is green, shading from a kind of blue bloom on the head into rich yellowish green; the lower breast is scarlet, the primary wing-feathers blue. Its full, long tail is extremely beautiful: on the upper side the feathers are of deep claret colour shading into peacock blue, and on the under side soft yellow, like autumnal leaves. I collect them at the moult, and they are a study of shades.

The spring after my visit to Antwerp a London bird dealer owed me £1. I had sent it for a Rockpeplar, which he pretended to have despatched, but at last confessed he had not. His man advised me to take anything I could get as the master was very hard up. I looked round the shop, but saw nothing

tempting. There were two Illigers in wretched plight, whose cages showed that their internal state was all that a Parrot's should not be. They had belonged to a fancier of ill repute who had fled from justice, and had been neglected; I was offered one for my sovereign. I hesitated and returned to the country; then I thought of the birds at Antwerp, and sent for the better of the two. He duly arrived, and certainly was a very unpromising and uninteresting specimen. I sent him to my warmest bird-room: it is in the grounds and far from the house, where birds have a quiet time. When the windows are open I have often listened below unseen, and heard funny essays at talking; but the Illiger long continued painfully timid, and clung to the farthest side of the cage whenever he was approached. He was named "Jerry," and after a few months a boy, who assisted in the aviaries, said he had called out "Jerry,"—I disbelieved the statement, but no doubt it was perfectly true. Parrots would do and say almost anything for this boy.

The next year "Jerry" came down from this room, which is in a very lofty position, to the garden, and shared the régime of several other Parrots, which spend most of their days in a glazed verandah or on terraces, and their nights in rooms over the stables. By degress he became much tamer, frequently repeated his name in various voices, and then learnt to say almost everything that my favourite Patagonian Conure said. My only complaint against him is that he has caused the Conure by degrees almost to cease to talk from sheer disgust and jealousy. When I speak to the Conure "Jerry" answers for him, and then he is silent. In one way only do they ever perform in unison; they sometimes jointly imitate a hen which has laid an egg, and set off a whole troop of Bantams cackling. The Illiger will invariably talk for me if I am alone, though not always if strangers are present. His sayings, I confess, are only about a dozen. His own name he says in several different voices, from a regular scream when one is at a distance, to the softest whisper when one's ear is near. He is very affectionate and delights to kiss; but he is not proof against one passion: he is crazily jealous, and has occasionally bitten his attendants when he thought they were attending too much to another bird. Through the whole time (over three-and-a-half years) that I have had him, he has constantly improved both intellectually and physically, and his plumage is exquisitely close and glossy. It may be interesting to some aviculturists to know that a bird, evidently of mature years when I first had him, should have become, instead of so wild and uncouth a creature, an educated and civilized one; and

still more that his physical condition, so unpleasantly deranged, should gradually have improved till at the end of three years he was quite cured.

Last summer he busied himself for days over a fastening of his cage door, with the result that he at last broke it, raised the door with his head, and flew off. At some distance I saw a grand bird with outspread tail fly over an oak tree. Every bird in the menagerie screamed, and I wondered which of my foreign Pheasants had escaped this time, till I found "Jerry's" tenantless cage. At first he enjoyed his liberty much, but never went far. From dawn the next day he conversed from tall fir trees; the day turned wet, and he amused himself in biting shoots off walnut trees; by the second morning he looked bored and took much notice of all our proceedings. Then he gradually descended a big copper beech. I held his cage up and he let himself down to it, and was evidently delighted to be in it again. Once more he got out, but within an hour flopped on to the cage of another bird as it was being carried. He had found out that liberty has its disadvantages, and now makes no serious attempts to get out. I should have no fear whatever of turning him out any day, save for the oak carving outside the house, or furniture if he came in at a window; released once in the bird-room he quickly snapped off the pinnacle of a fine new cage.

I think the story of "Jerry" will show that an Illiger may be a very fascinating and companionable pet.

Since the above lines were penned "Jerry's" portrait has appeared in the pages of the *Feathered World*.

THE INDIAN SHÂMA.

By the Rev. HUBERT D. ASTLEY, F.Z.S.

(Illustrated by the Author).

A most charming cage-bird! Bold, vivacious, easily kept in good health, rich in colouring, though not gaudy, with a voice of great melody and much power of mimicry, the Indian Shâma must necessarily rank amongst the most coveted of cage-birds.

In Lydekker's "Royal Natural History" it is described as delicate, requiring care in the colder climate of Great Britain. It is true that if a Shâma be exposed to draughts and improperly fed and kept, this may be the case; but I have not found it to be so. My Shâmas have lived well, and the one from which I have taken my sketch is now in magnificent plumage, ready on the coldest morning to plunge into his bath, in which he splashes until he has thoroughly wetted every glossy feather about him.

His tameness is that of all individuals of his family that I have ever seen. Show him the tin containing mealworms and open his cage door! He positively darts to you, settles on your arm, or on the edge of the box, and the mealworm held in your fingers has disappeared before you have time to say "Jack Robinson."

It is aggravating that hen birds should so seldom be imported, for, if I remember rightly, a brood was successfully raised in London by Mr. Phillipps.

By looking at the illustration, anyone unacquainted with the colours of the male bird can easily picture them in the mind's eye: his size being rather larger than the Robin; the whole head, throat and back a glossy blue-black with a splendid sheen thereon, as in the plumage of a swallow; all the breast and underparts a bright rich chestnut; the wings dark brown, each of the primaries edged with lighter brown; the tail black in the centre, the shorter and outside feathers being white,* whilst the tail-coverts show conspicuously in a patch of snowy whiteness; the bill is black; the legs and feet flesh-colour; and the eyes are large and full like a Robin's, and of deepest brown. The whole of the outline of the bird is extremely graceful, much of which grace is given by the length of the tail.

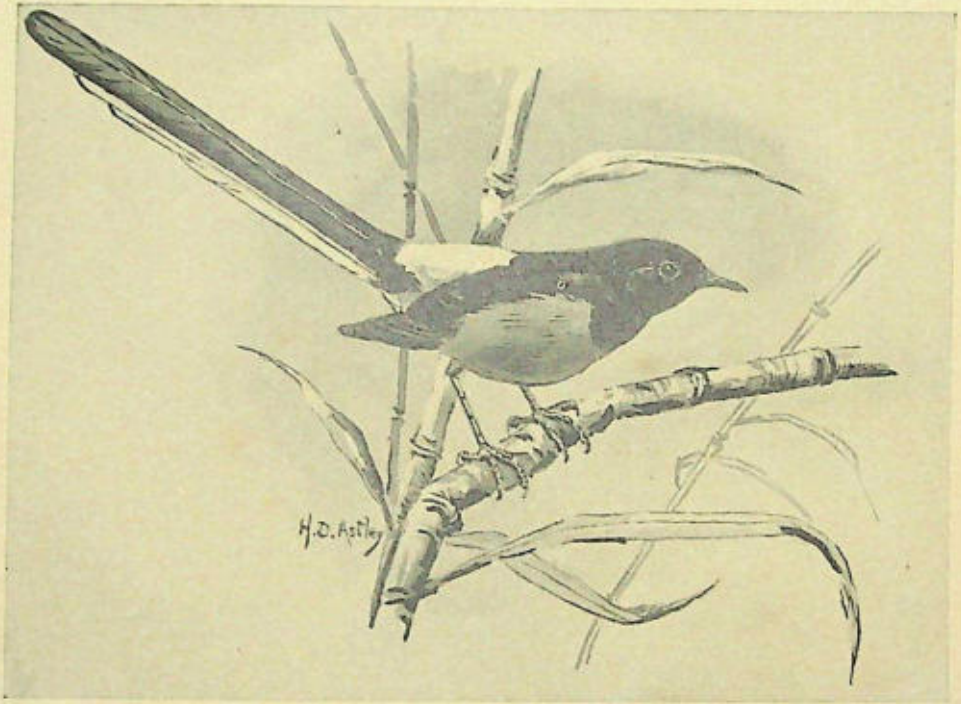
A Shâma should never be kept in a small cage, and cane or wooden bars are the best, care being taken that the perches are placed so that the tail will not be rubbed or broken; but it is a bird which will preserve its plumage well from one autumn to another, and its feathers do not seem to have the brittleness of many of our English Warblers, such as the Nightingale and the Blackcap.

A Shâma fed upon some reliable insectivorous food, as sold by men like Mr. Abrahams and Mr. Cross, will prosper; but fresh chopped raw beef, mealworms, fruit in season, and insects should be given in addition to the food ordinarily placed freshly each morning in the food-trough; and don't forget a big bath.

The Shâma (*Cittocincla tricolor*) is a resident in India; a jungle bird, I believe; where his beautiful voice must be a great addition to the haunts of Peafowl and to jungle-life in general. There the Shâmas nest between April and June. Other species of the same family are to be found in the Malay Peninsula, the Andaman Islands and the Philippines.

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* None of the tail-feathers of *Cittocincla tricolor* are wholly white, even the outer having each a black base. If the outer tail-feathers of Mr. Astley's bird are wholly white, it is not *C. tricolor* but *C. suavis*.—R.P.



THE INDIAN SHAMA.

(From a Drawing by the Rev. H. D. Astley, F.Z.S.) [Page 67.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DEALERS' NAMES FOR BIRDS.

SIR,—The compilation of a glossary of dealers' names appears to be much desired: but it would be almost impossible for a single individual to undertake it unless supported by a Committee of other members of this Society.

In 1883 a Committee of the British Ornithological Union prepared a list of British birds, which should be in the library of every British observer. Could not the Avicultural Society form a Committee with an enthusiast as Secretary and Editor?

The Latin or so-called scientific, as well as the dealers' names, are rather an uncertain quantity, and a Committee could give a standing to the names selected, which could not be done by an individual.

Latterly, owing to the muddling of systems, systematic nomenclature is now rather at a discount, and fire-side work is undervalued. Hence any number of observations are offered to the public in a desultory and unchecked form.

According to my view the first thing to be done would be to select the regular Latin name in more common use for each species, and then to arrange a glossary.

I need hardly add that such a Committee as I have suggested should be mainly resident in town, and that the assistance by letter of country members should be invited.

CHAS. LOUIS HETT.

SIR,—In reply to the queries re names of birds, perhaps the following list may be found interesting. I have also given the names used by some of the Australian dealers; Australia is rich in birds—there are 700 known species, 600 of which are to be found in Queensland.

	ENGLISH DEALERS' NAMES.	AUSTRALIAN DEALERS' NAMES.
Australian Waxbill ..	Sydney Waxbill ..	Red-head
Crimson-eared Waxbill ..	Cordon Bleu	
Crimson-winged Waxbill	Aurora Finch ..	
Cinereous Waxbill ..	Lavender Finch ..	
Red-bellied Waxbill ..	St. Helena Waxbill ..	
Banded Grass-finch ..	Parson Finch ..	Black-throat
Bicheno's Finch ..	Double-banded Finch	Double-bar
Chestnut-eared Finch ..	Zebra Finch	Same
Crimson Finch ..	Australian Fire-finch ..	Blood-finch
Fire-tailed Finch ..	Pin-tail Nonpareil ..	
Gouldian Finch ..	Same	Painted
Modest Grass-finch ..	Cherry- or Plum-head	Cherry
Ribbon Finch	Cut-throat	
Rufous-tailed Grass-finch	Same	Star Finch
Spotted-sided Finch ..	Diamond Sparrow ..	Same

	ENGLISH DEALERS' NAMES.	AUSTRALIAN DEALERS' NAMES.
Chestnut-breasted Finch	Chestnut Finch ..	Same
Hooded Finch ..	Bronze Mannikin ..	
Maja Finch	White-headed Nun ..	
Ultramarine Finch ..	Combasou	
Yellow-shouldered Weaver	Caffre Finch	
Weavers	Bishops	
Black-crested Cardinal..	Green Cardinal ..	
Melodious Finch ..	Cuba Finch	
Red-headed Cardinal ..	Pope	
Blue-bird	Blue Robin	
Hangnest	Troupial	
Piping Crow	Same	Magpie
Crested Dove	Same	Top-knot
Diamond Dove ..	Same	Red-eyes
Green-winged Dove ..	Same	Green Pigeon
Peaceful Dove	Same	Blue-eyes
Cockatiel	Same	Onary Hen
Gauga Cockatoo ..	Same	Gang-gang
Leadbeater Cockatoo ..	Same	Major Mitchell, and Wee Juggler
Roseate Cockatoo ..	Rosy Cockatoo ..	Galah
Slender-bill Cockatoo ..	Same	Corilla
Musky Lorikeet ..	Same	Pink-cheeks
Swainson's Lorikeet ..	Blue Mountain Lory ..	Same
Barnard's Parrakeet ..	Same	Bulla Bulla
Barraband Parrakeet ..	Same	Green-leek
Bauer's Parrakeet ..	Same	Port Lincoln
Black-tailed Parrakeet ..	Rock Peplar	Same
Blossom-h'ded Parrakeet	Plum-head Parrakeet..	
Grey-breasted Parrakeet	Quaker Parrakeet ..	
Javan Parrakeet ..	Moustache Parrakeet..	
Pale-headed Rosella ..	Mealy Rosella ..	Same
Pennant Parrakeet ..	Same	Loury
Rose-hill Parrakeet ..	Rosella	Joey
Yellow-naped Parrakeet	Same	Twenty-eight Parrot
Passerine Parrakeet ..	Blue-winged Love-bird	
Rosy-faced Love-bird ..	Peach-faced Love-bird	

JAMES B. HOUSDEN.

FOREIGN BIRD NOTES.

SIR,—Please read (referring to the names of Queensland birds, in January No.), "Cockatoos Black and White; Magpies." The printer has put the stop in the wrong place.

J. B. HOUSDEN.

FOOD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

SIR,—The article in the *Avicultural Magazine* by Mr. Perkins, giving his experience with some of the smaller Warblers was, I thought, particularly interesting; and, while I do not feel competent to say just what was the cause of his failure, I am strongly of opinion that if he had kept his Willow Wrens, Chiffchaffs, and Sedge Warblers in cages indoors, either together or separately, and fed them more sparingly, he would not have had to record such a tale of woe.

The food for and feeding of soft-billed birds has been a pet subject of mine for years, and I could fill many pages of our Magazine with records of both success and failure. The main difficulty the keeper of soft-bills has to cope with, is the fact that what one bird will eat readily and thrive upon, another of the same species will do neither.

In spite of many advertisements to the contrary, a perfect food has yet to be found; and it is curious to compare the endless differences in the mixtures to be seen in the food-tins of the various birds one sees on the show-bench. In catering for the smaller Warblers I can recommend a mixture of good ants' eggs and yolk of hard-boiled egg as a base. Bread crumbs I do not believe in, as I am convinced that the smaller birds eat only what they cannot avoid, through their being incorporated with the mixture; and the white of egg will disagree even with human beings, especially in hot weather. To the egg and ants' eggs let there be added finely chopped green stuff (lettuce, watercress, sprouts, cabbage). Mealworms certainly ought to be given sparingly, and ought to be cut in halves before being given.* Let me also give a wrinkle in the preparing of eggs for consumption: don't *boil* them, let them gently simmer for twenty minutes, they will then turn out much lighter and more easy of digestion than if boiled to the consistency of leather—This hint was given in a work on Poultry, published many years ago, but few seem to know it or practise it. If the birds don't thrive on the mixture given above, I have found it good to add scraped raw lean beef; but great care needs be exercised in giving this, as an overdose will bring on diarrhœa, and in the case of larger birds, larks and thrushes, causes baldness. Blackbeetles and cockroaches I have never known to disagree; and I have frequently been amazed at the ability of the Whinchat to swallow quite gigantic specimens of these malodorous creatures.

I distinctly do not wish it to be understood that I have given the only formula on which the smaller Warblers can be kept, because I have long since found out that there are many people who successfully keep these interesting little creatures on quite different lines, nor do I contend that I have given the best recipe. One's ideas receive periodical shocks in this connexion in a manner that effectually prevents conceit. Only a few weeks ago a gentleman who is very successful with Blackcaps told me his method, and *ants' eggs were conspicuous by their absence*; and I remember coming across a particularly fine Blackbird just as his owner was preparing his food, and I asked the usual question—"How do you feed it?" the reply was "On cheese, of course; what else would you give a Blackbird?" Needless to say, this reply was too much for me.

To the aviarist bent on keeping our British Warblers, I would say, in conclusion, that cages are better than an outdoor aviary; give good nourish-

* In my opinion cruel and unnecessary.—R.P.

ing food, little and often; closely observe each bird's particular vanity, and fall back on that at the first sign of debility, and if the signs of recovery are not apparent in a few hours give the poor creature its liberty while it yet has the strength to fly and find what it requires.*

T. MARSHALL.

SIR,—Perhaps my way of feeding will interest some readers.

Bread crumbs, mashed boiled potatoes, finely chopped cooked beef or mutton, and grated dog-biscuit, mixed, with sometimes a little boiled carrot or boiled bullock's liver (grated) added, and always a few whole groats thrown on the top of the mixed food. The groats, I think, are excellent for all birds; they give gloss to the plumage and a healthy-looking excrement. My Blackbird is fond of groats, also my Chinese Spectacle Thrush and Piping Crow; but the Shâma, I think, hardly touches them. I always give them to Canaries and all seed-eating birds that will eat them—a few with discretion.

When insect-food is scarce my substitute is unbaked pie-paste, made with flour and lard, then rolled between the fingers (with a little flour) to the size of small mealworms. The birds relish a few of these now and then. The Rock Parrot will eat a piece the size of a nut with avidity.

SAMUEL BURG[illegible]

SIR,—Although I do not keep insect-eating birds, I could have wished that some of the members who do would have given their opinion of Sergeant Hanley's diet of hard-boiled yolk of egg and lean raw beef pounded together. I know his letters were unchallenged at the time they appeared. It seemed to me that to breed Nightingales in an ordinary breeding-cage was a very successful feat. But as no one says anything about his diet, it looks as though those who have experience consider it entirely unsuitable.†

As to the feeding of Lories, a bun made of egg, flour, and sugar, stale, and soaked in hot water, then squeezed dry and mashed with half its quantity of dried fig, soaked in boiling water, will keep these birds in the best of health.

In "Parrots in Captivity" I see that Dr. Greene dwells much on the difficulty of keeping the Many Coloured and Paradise Parrakeets alive. I should not care to try the diet he recommends, and I very strongly suspect the difficulty of keeping these birds consists in over-feeding, and not giving enough exercise. Blue-bonnets, Many-coloured, and Paradise Parrakeets are most restless birds, and shortish commons and plenty of room would probably be found their best medicine.

F. G. DUTTON.

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* This interesting letter was to have appeared in last month's Magazine, but it was crowded out. Its omission made the second foot-note on page 49 incorrect.—ED.

† I recently saw a very fine Nightingale at a Show. The food in the cage consisted of yolk of hard-boiled egg and raw meat.—H. R. F.

SIR,—Perhaps it may be of interest to some of our members to learn that I succeeded in keeping a Spotted Flycatcher for considerably over a year on a mixture of ants' eggs scalded, and hard-boiled yolk of egg, with a plentiful supply of mealworms daily. I obtained the bird three years ago at the L. & P. O. S., he then being in immature plumage; I subsequently sent him to the Palace where he got a card. I had some trouble with him during his moult, which he took a long time to accomplish, but he was never "in extremis" as Mr. Fulljames' Long-tailed Tit seems to have been. I had unfortunately to leave my birds for some six weeks to the care of an individual whose experience in that line was extremely limited, and the Flycatcher was one of several that succumbed during my absence. I should not have mentioned the fact, had I not been told that the Spotted Flycatcher is exceedingly difficult to keep for any length of time, and to successfully cage-moult one quite an exception. I should not be surprised to learn that his diet might have been very easily improved upon, and I am inclined to agree with those who think that hard-boiled yolk is indigestible; at the same time I know of nothing to suggest as a substitute.

The Honey-eaters and Bell-birds in my possession have been kept with success on a mixture of bread-crumbs, potato, ants' eggs, and preserved yolk of egg. Thrushes, Mocking-birds and the like have a preparation that is bought locally, which seems to be composed of meal, crissel, ants' eggs, and crushed hemp; this is made moist with raw grated carrot, and they seem to do very well on it. I "ring the changes" occasionally with a mixture recommended by Mr. V. Castellan, but the principal ingredients are, I fancy, much the same.

Starlings and Pastors are fed on whatever is over from the others; they seem to eat any and everything, and thrive on it too.

Bulbuls and Tanagers have a diet similar to the Honey-eaters, with the addition of plenty of ripe fruit; those most delightful of all birds to my mind, the Green Bulbuls, existing almost exclusively on the latter—five which have been in my possession for a lengthy period consume per head more than twice the amount of any other Fruit-eater in the bird-room.

With regard to birds which are by nature carnivorous, meat in some shape or form is a necessity, and the result, especially if kept in a confined space, is, to put it mildly, odoriferous. I have found that, to a great extent, this unpleasant characteristic can be remedied by providing a larger supply of insect food, and a proportionally smaller quantity of raw meat. The European Roller, which is, as far as my limited experience goes, one of the worst offenders in this respect, is fed largely on black beetles, gentles, and earthworms, the latter from one to two inches long; this with the addition of a few mealworms will obviate the necessity of much raw meat. One of the three in my possession has occasionally condescended to taste the mixture provided for some of the other birds, but apparently does not relish it.

A fine Himalayan Pie lives almost exclusively on Sparrows, and he could not be termed "niffy" by the most fastidious.

Two species of the family Laniidæ, viz.: the Red-backed Shrike, and the Woodchat are fed on ants' eggs and preserved yolk, beetles, earthworms and gentles, etc., and do well on it; a tiny morsel of raw beef very occasionally is all the meat they get. They are in every way perfectly "sweet."

RUSSELL HUMPHRYS.

THE SCHEDULE FOR THE CRYSTAL PALACE SHOW.

As the Crystal Palace Bird Show is this year under new management the schedule is of more than usual interest, and perhaps a little space may be usefully employed in comparing it with its predecessor.

I cannot take upon myself to express an opinion upon the classification of British Birds, but as far as I am capable of judging it seems to be fairly good. There are one or two more classes, but the amount of prize money distributed among them seems to be about the same as before. There is a class for "A.O.V. resident Finch or Bunting," and the other A.O.V. classes are reserved for Insectivorous Birds only—this seems to be a decided improvement. The Migratory Birds are placed among the British, and not, as before, in a section by themselves; and the A.O.V. Migratory are divided into two classes—one for Insectivorous and the other for Seed-eating. There is a class for "Any Variety of European Bird not included in the National British Bird and Mule Club's List"—why this class is placed in the British section is not very apparent.

There are five extra classes in the Foreign section, but the average amount of prize money per class is somewhat reduced. The classification for 1897, for which it is an open secret that Dr. Simpson was mainly responsible, is somewhat closely adhered to: with five extra classes it *might* have been greatly improved. The chief alteration among the small seed-eaters is that in place of the class for "Any species of Grassfinch, Mannikin, or Waxbill, not previously mentioned," there are now two—"Any variety of Waxbill," and "Any variety of Mannikin." The use of the word "variety," when species is intended, is silly—and it looks all the more stupid because "species" is retained in the case of those classes in which there has been no alteration. I have before pointed out that the huge class for Grassfinches, Mannikins, and Waxbills sadly wanted dividing, but it is disappointing that the division has been so carelessly effected. The result is that the rarer Grassfinches cannot be exhibited at all. The common ones can appear in the class for "Any variety of Foreign Bird other than Parrots, pairs not to exceed £2, single birds not to exceed £1": but such birds as the Long-tailed Grassfinch, the Red-headed Finch, and Bicheno's Finch (unless their owners are willing to part with them at a low price) are altogether excluded. Probably the framers of the Schedule intended that the Grassfinches should be shown in the Finch class, as they have changed the wording of that class from "Any species of True Finch, Bunting or Grosbeak not previously mentioned" to "Any other variety Finch, Bunting or Grosbeak." If this was the intention it is scarcely necessary to say that it has not been carried out—by all rules of construction "Finch, Bunting or Grosbeak" can mean nothing but "any species of *Fringillinæ*, *Emberizinæ*, or *Coccothraustinæ*" (that is, any species of *Fringillidæ*), and cannot possibly include *Ploceidæ*. The judge would undoubtedly feel bound to disqualify Grassfinches if exhibited in this class, for to do otherwise would be to show himself as ignorant of the most elementary principles of classification as the framers of the Schedule obviously are. If the words "Bunting or Grosbeak" had been omitted, it might have been reasonably contended that the word "Finch" is used in a wide popular sense so as to include all Finch-like birds, but the addition of the names of these two sub-families shows clearly that the word Finch is used in the sense of True Finch only:

for if "Finch" means all Finch-like Birds, why particularise two sub-families? Such a construction would be as ridiculous as if one were to say "any other variety of mammal, dog or cat."

The division of the A.O.V. Insectivorous or Fruit-eating birds into two classes is a welcome change. The classes for common birds are also a good motion—there is one for Parrots and one for other birds. The only alteration of importance in the Parrot classes is the formation of a separate class for Macaws: this is a welcome and long-needed reform.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

BREAD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

SIR,—I am rather astonished to see one statement in the letter by Mr. Fulljames in the January No. of the Magazine, namely, that Nightingales and Warblers would not eat bread, or would not digest it if they did.

I believe Mr. Fulljames is a subscriber to "British Birds with their Nests and Eggs," and therefore he must be aware that one of the Nightingales which I hand-reared in 1887 was fed partly upon bread from August 1887 to August 1888, and another from August 1887 to December 1888; and I am sure that hand-reared Nightingales naturally have not the same power of resisting the influence of adverse circumstances as trapped birds. But, considering how closely related the Nightingale is to the Robin, and the fact that the latter bird, during hard winters, feeds mainly upon bread when in the neighbourhood of towns and villages, it surely seems an unwarranted supposition that this food cannot be digested by the Nightingale.

From personal experience I can positively assert that the Blackcap and Garden Warbler do eat bread, and that it does not disagree with them: my present example of the latter species has twice moulted in my possession, and is now in perfect health and plumage: it not only eats bread and uncooked apple, but swallows a good deal of canary- and millet-seed of its own free will, yet it never looks unhappy or out of sorts.

I think it is a mistake for an aviculturist to assert positively that any food which is wholesome and nutritious in itself cannot be digested by any group of birds (at any rate until he has given it a fair and impartial trial). Mr. Fulljames is a man of judgment, and he acted wisely in administering beef-tea to a sickly bird; yet he goes out of his way to declare that a far more natural food is indigestible. This curious prejudice against the staff of life is very puzzling to me: I use a considerable quantity of bread every week and yet my soft-food eaters are healthy. Surely for a Blue-bird to have kept in vigour and good condition for nine years, a *Liothrix* in moderate health for ten years, a Blackbird in perfect health for nearly five years, a Pileated Jay for four or five years (with many others for shorter terms) should be a pretty good test of the value of bread as one item, in soft-food mixtures, which is not injurious to health. My English Jay and my Shathatch will eat pieces of crumb bread broken from a loaf with relish; I have even seen my Superb Tanager do the same, although I rarely offer it bread alone.

A. G. BUTLER.

THE GREEN AVADAVAT.

SIR,—I hope Mr. Todd will not think me discourteous in expressing regret that he should be testing the hardiness of several species of foreign birds. I have kept many hundreds of foreign birds,—granivorous, frugivorous, insectivorous, large and small, birds of prey, ground birds, Crows, Jays, Pies, Finches, Waxbills (including Green Avadavats), and British migrants, and the more I see of them the more I am satisfied that to subject them to unnecessary cold is not only cruel, but a great mistake. Many die and many live—and it is wonderful what trials some will stand; but I am convinced that a large proportion of those which are supposed to have successfully passed the test do not live out half their days, ofttimes not a quarter.

Look at some of these little birds, Green Avadavats if you like, in the cold; the greater part of the day they spend huddled together in some box or nest; and when compelled to venture out for food they are lumpy and fluffy. Look at the same specimens in a moderately warm room; they are tight, sleek, active, and as happy as the day is long (I extend the length of the winter days with artificial light). The larger birds act differently, usually sitting shivering on their perches, excepting the different species of Mynahs and Starlings, who naturally take to the nests and boxes; they feel the cold acutely, but do not die nearly so readily as the others. I regularly let many of my larger birds out for a constitutional during the winter, some even in severe weather, but only for a limited time, longer or shorter according to the day, and the change is distinctly beneficial. When the window is opened, they rush out like mad things, with joyous shrieks and yells. I have but to give the signal, and back they go again as docile as dogs, usually more so than children, and are safely shut up in their cosy room. I no more allow them to stay out in the cold as long as they like than I would allow a child to do so.

Mr. Todd admits the importance of protecting the females from cold, and says it would certainly be advisable to separate the sexes during the winter. But most of the Waxbills and foreign Finches are truly miserable when separated. And more than half the pleasure of keeping these little creatures consists in seeing them together and watching their deep affection for one another. Of course it is sometimes absolutely necessary to separate the sexes—but even human beings cannot always have their own way; and those species which separate in their wild state should be kept separate in captivity.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Mr. ALEXANDER T. L. PHILLIPPS, Cairo, Egypt.

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The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 6 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable. Each advertisement should be written on a separate sheet of paper, with the name and address of the advertiser at the foot.*

Pair of European Rollers, hand-reared, ten months old.
RUSSELL HUMPHRYS, Lingdale, Bickley, Kent.

Cock Zosterops or Spectacle-bird, in fine condition and song, 30/; three Orange-cheeks, 4/6 lot.
Miss E. BAMFORD, St. Cuthberts Leys, Bedford.

Norwich Canaries, 1897, very handsome, cocks 5/6, hens 3/6, variegated and clear.
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Pair of Rufous-backed Mannikins (*Spermestes nigriceps*), perfect condition. What offers or exchange?
Miss HODGSON, Hernewood, Sevenoaks.

Crimson-wing, cock, fine plumage, winner, 55/-; male Swainson's Lorikeet, 25/-; male Mealy Rosella, 25/-; male Green Cardinal, 15/-; pair Cockatiels, now nesting, 15/6; hen Blue Robin, 10/6; hen Peach-face, 10/6; hen Yellow Budgerigar, 7/6, or with Green cock 10/6. Above are all perfectly acclimatised, from garden aviary.
F. W. OATES, White House Farm, New Leeds, Leeds.

(Continued on page 4 of cover).

(Continued from page 3 of cover).

Cock Desert Bullfinch, Show plumage, singing, 15/6; cock "Metallic Blackbird," good plumage, in song; Grey Singing-finch, fine plumage, sex unknown—the two 10/-; Dark-crested cock Canary, '97 bred, good song, 10/-. S. BURGE, Ivy Cottage, Fairford.

Two cock Citril Finches, cage-moulted and in song, 15/- each; two cock St. Helena Seed-eaters (*Serinus flaviventris*), acclimatised cold room, 3/- each, or exchange cock Serin Finch or Grey Singing-finch in song
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Bulbuls, Green Bulbuls, and Sugar-birds (any species).
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Avicultural Magazine,

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AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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NESTING OF THE GOLDEN-CROWNED PARRAKEET OF NEW ZEALAND.

(Cyanorhamphus auriceps).

By GEO. E. BOUSKILL.

It was late in the season to allow my Golden-crowns to nest, and the only portion of my aviary which I could allot to them at the time was occupied by a pair of Turquoisines and a pair of Budgerigars, the latter of which had young; but before these had left the husk the Golden-crowns had begun to prospect on their own account; and as I did not want the young Budgerigars to be turned out of their nest, I decided to put up another husk, and it was in this that the Golden-crowned Parrakeets settled down to nest.

The hen built a cup-shaped nest, using the fibre off the inside of the cocoanut-husk, and in this she laid five pure white eggs, which were very round, and, I think, large for the size of the bird (they almost equalled in size the egg of the Rosella). The female alone incubated the eggs, and a most dutiful parent she was, rarely leaving her nest except to be fed by her mate. Incubation lasted about twenty-one days from the laying of the first egg. As I stated in my last paper, the first egg was laid on the 24th of October, and the fifth on the 28th: this would fix the time for hatching to be about the 14th of November. You can imagine how anxious I was when the 5th of November arrived, for my neighbours had their children to please and could not be expected to study my birds. I was greatly afraid that the illuminations and flashes of light would frighten the hen bird off her nest, and so let the precious eggs get cold; to obviate this, I covered the glass portion of the aviary with dust sheets; the loud reports I could not keep out, and so far as noise was concerned, the birds had to take their chance. I have read

somewhere that "a loud report or the slamming of a door will kill young birds in the shell;" mine, however, had a fair test in that respect on the 5th of November last. But the hen Golden-crown was not so easily startled, and proved herself a most assiduous sitter.

When first hatched the young were covered with a dirty yellow down; they grew very rapidly; and during the first week the hen bird did not leave them much, but the cock bird fed her both whilst she brooded her young and when she came off for a little exercise. As the young got stronger, she left them more frequently, and when about ten days old both birds entered the nest to feed their young. They began to feather when about fourteen days old, and were fully fledged when about a month old. The young did not leave the nest until they were five weeks old. They were then very much like their parents, except that the crimson band above the upper mandible was hardly perceptible, and the patch of golden-yellow less bright, the red under the wings was only just indicated, and the beak was flesh colour, being rather darker at the tip. The young were reared on canary, hemp and millet seed, and in addition, about thirty to forty mealworms per diem, and stale bread soaked in cold water and then squeezed nearly dry.

About a fortnight or so after the young had left the nest, I was so unfortunate as to lose three out of the five young ones: they died without giving the least warning. The last one of the three I sent to a well-known aviculturist for *post-mortem* examination, and received from him the following report: "The crop was filled with hemp, the liver was much congested, and the kidneys were affected although to a lesser extent; but there was great effusion of blood on the surface and in the substance of the brain which was the immediate cause of death, the congestion of the liver being the remote one. You would find a diet of canary seed and oats preferable to what you have been giving. The bird was a male and in excellent condition."

It would seem quite possible that the hemp seed was the main cause of the death of the young ones, as the old birds are particularly fond of hemp and will eat no other seed so long as there is any hemp left. I now only give them a little occasionally. The remaining young are doing very well and can scarcely be distinguished from their parents.

BRITISH BIRDS AT THE PALACE.

By THOMAS MARSHALL.

In attempting to say something respecting the 472 specimens of British birds at the 1898 Crystal Palace gathering of birds, and their owners, there seems such a variety of lines to go upon that one hardly knows which will be the most acceptable to the readers of our Magazine. To criticise the birds is only doing what many of our members have done for themselves, to criticise the judging is to bring down upon one's self the wrath of the successful exhibitor, and to write of the catering for the exhibits is, we know from experience, an utter waste of labour. It was to be hoped, after what I stated in the Magazine last year, and which was afterwards borne out by Mr. Fulljames Mr. A. Jones, that this year the German paste abomination ld be conspicuous by its absence; but no, there it was as iful and as sticky as of yore.

To come to the birds, however, the specimens staged at s show were the best I ever looked over. Beginning with the Bullfinches the class was one long string of grand birds, and yet the winner (1,381) was such a superb specimen that the judge could have no difficulty in awarding the prize; some of his other awards would probably have been disturbed if the two Bullfinches wrongly entered in the Redpoll class had been in their proper place. The winners of first, second, and third prizes in the Goldfinch class were all the property of Mr. Williams, of Pontypridd, and it is interesting to note that each of this gentleman's birds got a prize, and also that another gentleman of the same name did the same thing with each of his fifteen entries! As, however, these latter were hybrids, they are outside the province of this paper. The fourth prize Goldfinch was the property of another Mr. Williams, one of our members, and was very unlucky to be beaten.

The Chaffinches were not, as a class, very remarkable, though there were several very good looking birds staged, and after selecting these the judge must have had some trouble in awarding the prizes, there being so very little to choose between them. I thought that prizes three and four might have been reversed. The man who wins a prize with a Chaffinch must always be looked upon as a fortunate individual, and deserving what he wins, as it is one of the most difficult birds to get steady (tameness, as we understand the word, being out of the question),

months of care often become wasted at the last moment in the transferring of the bird to the show-cage.

Linnets formed the next class, and these birds are such favourites of mine that it would not take much effort on my part to become effusive on their merits. The winner of the second prize must have misbehaved himself while under the judge's eye, or he must have been first, as he was full of quality all over. 1,505 was a Greenfinch, and was, of course, thrown out as being wrong class; as it came from Yorkshire, where Greenfinches are commonly called Green Linnets, the owner's mistake is pardonable.

The next class (Lesser Redpolls, and Twites) contained, as it generally does, a large proportion of freshly-caught birds, which, however, were very properly not allowed to win over genuine cage-moulted specimens. 1,564 and 1,565 were shewn in cages provided with all the paraphernalia generally used by fanciers for making these intelligent little creatures "do something for their living," by drawing up a small bone bucket out of a water receptacle suspended some foot or so below the cage. Such things are always associated with small minds, and it is very difficult to form an opinion as to the mental calibre of those who indulge in freaks of this kind. Amongst the Siskins, we find last year's winner (as in the Bullfinch class) quite unnoticed by the judge, and yet such is the fate which naturally, sooner or later, befalls champions, feathered and otherwise; and when that happens, owners should accept the inevitable, and allow their birds to rest on their laurels. The winner in this class was a remarkably fine bird, but might have been beaten by 1,570 (which took third) had it not been over done in the matter of colour-food. 1,578 was a capital Black-headed Siskin, and consequently was marked wrong class.

The next class for A. O. V. resident Finch or Bunting was very interesting, and here again an old winner, Mr. Raine's Hawfinch, was unnoticed; the first prize went to an exceedingly bright Yellowhammer. It has long been known to me that the further one gets away from London the better for getting good Yellowhammers, and this view was confirmed on my turning to the Index of the Catalogue and there finding that this winner comes from Aberdeen. Essex Yellowhammers are very dowdy creatures, and yet, curious to record, Essex Chaffinches are the best in England; but this is a digression. The second prize went to a very good Greenfinch, and the third to another Yellowhammer, thus leaving the ten Hawfinches, all of which were good, out in the cold.

The Skylarks and Robins were two very ordinary classes. Messrs. Killbury's old champion Skylark was easily first, and this for the sixth year in succession; next to it I should have placed 1,634, which had to be content with a V. H. C. None of the Robins were up to show standard; the winner was a goodly shaped specimen, but by no means a bright one.

Blackbirds come next, and we are again treated to a sight of some superb specimens. Messrs. Hobbs' bird (first) was wonderfully steady, and had a beautiful eye cere; while next to it was Mr. Morgan's (1,672, V. H. C.), with an ideally shaped head and intense blackness of body feather.

In the Thrush class old birds were conspicuous by their absence. Clean-legged, racy, up-standing young birds comprised the bulk of this class, and a better lot of Thrushes have probably never been staged; some grandly marked birds were not awarded prizes, but the judge had a by no means easy task.

In the Starling class we were again brought face to face with old friends, and once more "talent" has had to give way to "appearances." The birds catalogued as "talkers," or otherwise accomplished, were absolutely unnoticed by the judge; the first prize bird was a particularly well marked bird, full of "work," and, to my mind, 1,703 V.H.C., might have been second. 1,720 was Mr. Fulljames' "Jacob," who had a deal to say, but I am sorry to say failed to make himself "understanded of me."

Class 107 for Magpies, Jackdaws, Jays, and Choughs was a very small one, but all the birds were in a first rate condition. I thought 1,723 V. H. C. a better and smarter Pie than the winner 1,724, which seemed dull and listless. Mr. Fulljames' and Mr. Gibbons' Choughs (1,729 second, and 1,725 V. H. C.) were really beautiful exhibits.

One of the most interesting classes in the whole show was that for Pied birds and Albinos, and in this class were some charming specimens: notably, 1,732, a Cinnamon Yellow-hammer (unnoticed), and 1,742, an Albino Skylark (V. H. C.), small, and undoubtedly a hen, but a true Albino with pink eyes. Mr. Fulljames' Cinnamon Starling was in grand condition, and was deservedly first in a class most difficult to judge. Two birds in this class well worthy of mention were Mr. Swailes' Yellow Greenfinch, 1,731, and Mr. Hay's White Greenfinch, 1,738, both of which were good exhibits and very uncommon.

Of the resident insectivorous birds not larger than a Woodlark there is little to be said. Mr. Staines' Stonechat and Mr. Poynter's Jenny Wren were first and second, and I was

pleased to see that both of them were independent of the fare provided by the authorities; had it been otherwise, neither of these interesting little creatures would ever have seen their home again alive. Mr. Maxwell took third prize with a very good Grey Wagtail; and here let me say that a Wagtail always seems to me to be more at home on a show bench than most of the birds that find their way there, and generally makes a graceful and charming exhibit.

Noticing that the first bird in the next class was catalogued as a "Peewit" I was looking forward to interviewing alive, and at close quarters, that bird of tradition, cursed of the Covenanters and blessed of the Tyrwhitts (whose family name is a Lincolnshire rendering of their call-notes), but alas, the occupant of the cage was a hen Ring Ouzel, and as the class was for larger *resident* insectivorous, was out of place. A Great Grey-backed Shrike, the first I remember to have seen on show, took first prize, and a well-shewn Woodpecker took second. It is not often that one has the pleasure of hearing a Nightingale singing on the show bench, but that shewn by Mr. Maxwell certainly sang on the occasion of my visit: the prize, however, went to Mr. Preston's 'Gale, the only entry that gentleman had in the show.

Three more classes and I shall have got through my task. Taking the last first we have, I believe, quite a new class, *i.e.*, one for Any Variety of European Bird not included in the N. B. B. and M. Club list. Not the least interesting exhibit in the class under consideration was a Crested Lark, which was unnoticed by the judge, owing to its obvious want of condition. A capital Blue-throated Warbler was awarded first prize, and Mr. Russell Humphrys was fortunate to get second with his Rose-coloured Pastor.

Classes 112 and 113 were for Migratory Insectivorous and Seed-eating respectively, and the former class shewed us the advisability of yet another division in the classification, for fair-play can hardly be dealt out where such birds as Ring Ouzels and Fieldfares are opposing Whitethroats and Redstarts. As it was, the smaller birds took the prizes, and the larger ones went without. 1808A was catalogued as a Blackcap, but the cage contained the remnant of a Swallow.

In the Seed-eating Migratory class such extremes did not exist, and the Bramblefinches secured the prizes—the winner, 1,820A, being a particularly well marked specimen. The fourth prize went to a very good Mealy Redpoll, albeit it was not cage-moulted.

Comparing the whole show with many of its predecessors the quality and condition of the exhibits were strikingly superior, and exhibitors generally seem to be acquiring a predilection for only such birds as are more or less difficult to keep, and the absence of Jays, Twites, Snow, Lapland, and Corn Buntings, Tree and Reed Sparrows bears out my remark.

SMALL FOREIGN BIRDS AND DOVES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

By A. G. Butler, Ph.D.

The show of small foreigners (but especially of soft-food eaters) was exceptionally fine this year, so that the task of judging must have been unusually heavy; it is therefore not at [illegible]urprising that not a few exhibitors are dissatisfied, and (in [illegible]e cases) I think, with reason: nevertheless every judge must [illegible]ided by his own opinion; and if, in certain classes, he [illegible]s to regard perfect plumage of greater importance than [illegible], there is no law to prevent his doing so.

The names given to the birds in many classes were less accurate than they usually are (which is saying a good deal), perhaps one of the most comical things being the substitution of a Ring-ouzel for a Peewit in the British Classes.

Class 115.—Gouldian Finches, etc.

The first prize was given to Mr. E. Griffith's male Red-headed Gouldian, which was perfect in plumage though, if rarity had been taken into consideration, Mr. Maxwell's Three-coloured Parrot-finch (though not perfect in feathering) must have stood first; it was however not noticed. The second prize went to a very good pair of typical Parrot-finches exhibited by Mr. H. B. Smith; the third to Mr. Maxwell's pair of Gouldian's, fourth to a good cock Black-head exhibited by Mrs. H. W. Wickens, and the fifth to Mr. Maxwell's cock Pin-tailed Nonpareil (entered as a pair). (*a*)

Class 116.—Java Sparrows.

A very beautiful white pair, exhibited in too small a cage by Mr. C. G. Knowles, carried off the first prize; whilst Mr. H. B. Smith's birds took the second and third prizes. I had so few Greys to choose from this year, most of my last year's young birds having been imperfect white specimens, that I stood little chance of a card.

(*a*) Possibly the hen may have died during the show.—A.G.B.

Class 117.—Weavers and Whydahs.

Messrs. Fulljames and Maxwell took four of the five prizes, the first and third being given to Crimson-throated Whydahs, the second to Mr. Smith's Oryx (still nearly in full breeding plumage), whilst the fifth prize was given to a common, cheap, though not frequently imported bird—the Half-masked Weaver.

Class 118.—Waxbills.

I fail to understand why exhibitors enter Bicheno's Finches in this Class, since they undoubtedly stand between Zebra and Cherry Finches, having the call-note of the former with a vague approach in coloration to the latter: they certainly are not Waxbills (*a*); those exhibited were apparently two cock birds. The first prize was properly awarded to Mr. Maxwell's splendid pair of Violet-eared Waxbills, the second to his Rufous-tailed Grass-finches, the third to his Crimson-finches, all of these being in very good condition.

Class 119.—Mannikins.

Mr. Maxwell's Pectoral-finch (entered as a pair) took first prize and Mr. Fulljames' pair stood second: his Magpie Mannikins did not look to me like a pair, and Mr. Abrahams probably disqualified them for that reason.

Class 122.—Cardinals.

Mr. Davis' Thick-billed Cardinal was hardly in show condition, therefore only got a card, Miss A. P. Jackson taking first prize with a good male Green. Mr. C. Verrall's Pope took second, Mrs. Frostick's Virginian third, Mr. Verrall's male Green fourth.

Class 123.—Mixed Finches.

This Class is a curious jumble of *Fringilline* and *Ploceine* birds, and I must confess that I cannot follow the judging: I should have given Mr. Maxwell's pair of Long-tailed Grass-finches first and Mr. Russell Humphrys' Trumpeter Bullfinches second, but in other points I should not have done as our experienced judge did: my idea is that Mr. Maxwell's Mexican Siskin merited a third, Mr. Housden's Red-headed Finch a fourth, and Mr. Swaysland's Yellow-headed Sparrows at least a fifth: I do not understand common birds like Parson-finches (though they were not a bad pair) taking a prize at all; but it is evident that, in nearly all cases, plumage was considered before rarity.

(*a*) The Zoological Society are answerable for this, for they call the bird *Estrelda bichenovii*.—Ed.

Class 124.—Doves and Quails.

The names of the Doves were curiously mixed: Australian Crested Doves being entered as 'Diamond Doves,' Bronze-wings as 'Crested,' Peaceful as 'Zebra.' In this Class the rarest birds (Mr. Housden's Nicobar Pigeons) took the highest honours and, unless I am much mistaken, two cock Peaceful Doves, exhibited by the London Fanciers' Supply Association, the second; they were entered 'Two Zebra Doves, Cock.'

Class 125.—Tanagers and Bulbuls.

This was a splendid Class and really required several extra firsts to do it justice. To my mind Mr. Maxwell's Blue and Black Tanager, which took fifth, should have stood first, both for rarity and colouring; Mr. Humphrys' Blue-winged Green Bulbul second; his Black-crested Yellow Bulbuls third: Mr. Maxwell's Tricoloured Tanager extra third, his Greenish Tanager fourth, and his curiously coloured Tanager (No. 2,014) of which I do not know the name, fifth. I cannot see that birds which have become so common in the market as ordinary Green Bulbuls, or (much less) Red-eared Bulbuls, have any claim to more than V.H.C. for condition.

Class 126.—Crows, Starlings, etc.

Mr. Russell Humphrys' magnificent Occipital Blue Pie well deserved its place at the head of this Class; but Mrs. W. H. Field's Long-tailed Glossy Starling was somewhat bobtailed and not to be compared with Mr. H. B. Smith's Purple-headed Starling (No. 2,025). I should also have preferred Mr. Housden's Mexican Jay to Mr. Humphrys' Andaman Starling, although the latter was a very nice bird. Mrs. Field's Blue-hooded Jay (fourth) is a good bird and deserved its place, though a year in a good-sized flight would improve it. Mr. Fulljames' Malabar Mynah (fifth) was a capital specimen of a common species; I prefer Mr. Housden's Crested Mynahs, rarer and far more intelligent birds.

Class 127.—Smaller Insectivorous Birds.

Mr. Maxwell's beautiful male of *Dacnis cayana* surely had a higher claim to a first place than his much commoner though lovely little Spectacled birds (not 'Finches'), yet this Sugar-bird only got a V.H.C.: I cannot, with all deference to the great experience of an old friend, comprehend this decision.

Class 128.—Larger Insectivorous Birds.

Mr. Russell Humphrys' Racquet-tailed Drongo took first. I think I should have given preference to Mr. Maxwell's Green-

crested Touracou (which was in much better plumage, in spite of the quantities of sawdust which it was fed upon) (*a*): altogether, I quite approved of the judging in this Class, and felt inclined to pat my instructor upon the back (which is the way of the world when the judgment of the pupil chimes in with that of his preceptor).

Class 129.—A Mixed Selling-Class.

I should have given a prize to Mr. Fulljames' Madagascar Weaver in breeding plumage, in preference to the not very grand pair of Zebra-finches which took fifth prize, and I should have preferred No. 2,074 to 2,076 (fourth prize), which struck me as not being quite up to the mark: otherwise I was satisfied.

NOTES ON SOME OF THE FOREIGN BIRDS (OTHER THAN PARROTS) AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE SHOW.

By H. R. Fillmer.

The placing of the Class for "Any variety of European Bird not included in the N. B. B. and M. C. List," in the British Section is one of those things which, I suppose, only a "fancier" can understand, a mere aviculturist certainly cannot. The Class declares itself to be for non-British birds, and yet it is a British-bird Class! But let that pass. There were good birds in this Class, and Mr. Maxwell's Blue-throated Warbler was deservedly first. Mr. Russell Humphrys' Rose-coloured Pastor was second, and Mr. Fulljames' Blue Rock Thrush and Barred Warbler respectively third and fourth. The Class also contained three Waxwings, two Ortolan Buntings, a Crested Lark, a Pied Rock Thrush, and another Blue Rock Thrush (decidedly inferior to the prize-winner). It was a most interesting collection of birds, and no fault could, I think, be found with the judging.

There were no less than five pairs of Parrot Finches, none however in really perfect condition. These birds moult twice in the year, and are usually a long time over it, so that they are moulting during a large part of each year—this makes them very trying birds to the exhibitor. There was besides a Three-coloured Parrot Finch (*Erythrura trichroa*) a rarer but, to my thinking, a less beautiful species.

Passing over the Java Sparrows (about which there is

(*a*) I cannot understand why fruit-eating birds are expected to digest sawdust. I should almost as soon mix tintacks with their food: sand or earth in the tray would be far better.—A. G. B.

never much to be said), and the Weavers and Whydahs (about which much might be said, though not by me), I come to the Waxbills. Here were Violet-eared (properly first), Rufous-tails, Crimson Finches, Dufresne's Waxbills, Sydney Waxbills, Bicheno's Finches, St. Helenas, and a hen Cordon Bleu. Crimson Finches are commoner than Dufresne's Waxbills, but the former were placed over the heads of the Dufresnes, probably because the latter were a little out of condition. Mr. Storey's St. Helenas were of the small variety, no larger than the Grey Waxbill. The Bicheno's Finches were disqualified. Besides the Bicheno's Finches in this Class, the judge disqualified, in other Classes, a pair of Magpie Mannikins and a pair of Popes. These entries were presumably all disqualified on the ground that they were not true pairs: they are all birds in which the outward differences between the sexes (if there be any outward difference at all) are of an extremely slight and uncertain character, and, in my opinion, the judge would have been wiser to give these exhibits the benefit of the doubt.

The Mannikin Class contained only seven entries, one or two of which were absent. Both prizes went to Pectoral Finches.

There was nothing of special interest in the Cardinal Class, except Mr. Davis's Thick-billed Cardinal, and that has been seen once or twice before at the Palace. This year it was in rather rough feather.

The Class for "Any other variety of Finch, Bunting, or Grosbeak" was a most interesting one, and contained thirty-three entries—unfortunately the judge failed to do justice to it. A Virginian Cardinal, a Black-headed Mannikin, and a pair of Pectoral Finches were rightly marked 'wrong-class,' and the same course ought to have been taken with the Grass-finches, of which there were nearly a dozen entries. It is perfectly clear that Grass-finches had no business in a class for "Finches, Buntings and Grosbeaks," but if the judge decided to admit them he should, in common fairness, have refrained from "wrong-classing" *any* of the entries in the show. The first prize was awarded to a very fine pair of Long-tailed Grass-finches, the second to the Desert Trumpeter Bullfinches which were first last year, the third to a very ordinary pair of Parson Finches, the fourth to a Mexican Siskin, and the fifth to a Red-headed Finch. It will thus be seen that no less than three of the prize-winners had no business in the class. There were several entries of great interest (of species having a right to be in the class); among these I may especially mention an Elegant Bunting

from Japan, and Mr. Swaysland's three exhibits, *Chrysomitris tristis* (the so-called American Goldfinch, in winter plumage); *Chysomitris totta;* and what he calls the Yellow-headed Sparrow. The giving of the third prize to a pair of Parson Finches, not in the very best condition, and a mere V.H.C to the American Goldfinch, which was in perfect feather, is the worst piece of judging that has been seen at the Palace for some years. Judges are human, and like other people they will make mistakes, so that I am not disposed to be severe upon a judge for trifling errors such as awarding a prize to a bird which has lost a claw, or to two of the same sex of a species in which the sexes are almost alike—but putting a pair of Parson Finches (worth about 10/-) over the heads of a Mexican Siskin, a Citril Finch, and an American Goldfinch (not to mention other birds in the class of almost equal interest) was an error of a different kind, and shows the judge to be wanting in the judicial faculty.

And in the Class for "Any species of Tanager or Bulbul" the judging was nearly as bad. First, a splendid Blue-winged Green Bulbul, very properly first so far as condition goes—but how about rarity? Second, a Malabar Green Bulbul, young, and not quite in full plumage—the next exhibit was an adult specimen of the same species, in better condition, but this got only a V.H.C. Third, a magnificent Superb Tanager—a lovely specimen, but it ought not to have been put over the heads of the remaining prize-winners. Fourth, a hen Greenish Tanager. Fifth, a Blue and Black Tanager. The class also contained a most interesting pair of Black-crested Yellow Bulbuls, not in the best condition perhaps, but unique on the Show bench; a nice White-eared Bulbul; a Red-eared Bulbul, apparently a hen, and scarcely deserving the card awarded to it; a good pair of Violet Tanagers; several Scarlet and Superb Tanagers; and two or three rare Tanagers which I will not expose my ignorance of by discussing. All the birds of any interest in this class belonged either to Mr. Humphrys or to Mr. Maxwell.

"Any species of Crow, Jay, Magpie, Starling, or Mynah." First, Occipital Blue Pie; second, Long-tailed Glossy Starling; third, Andaman Starling; fourth, Blue-hooded Jay; fifth, Malabar Starling. The class also contained a Black-throated Grackle, which was first last year, a pair of Black-crested Mynahs, a Pileated Jay, and several birds of less attractive species. The awarding of the second prize in such a class to a rather poor Long-tailed Glossy Starling would be difficult to defend.

The Class for A.O.V. Small Insectivorous contained only five entries—a pair of Grey-backed Zosterops, a single bird of the same species, two pairs of Pekin Robins, and a rare little Sugar-bird which its owner rather oddly calls a Blue-headed Warbler. There would seem to be no difficulty here, the Sugar-bird being in the most perfect condition and undoubtedly rare—but no, with almost incredible wrong-headedness, the judge gives the only prize to the pair of Zosterops.

The large Insectivorous Class was well filled. First, Great Racquet-tailed Drongo; extra first, Toco Toucan. Second, a pair of Australian Pittas; extra second, *Sternus icteronotus*. (*a*) Third, Green-crested Touracou; extra third, Tui or Parson Bird. There were also—a specimen of *Cassidix oryzivora*; two Mocking Birds; several Toucans of different species; an Indian Barbet; a Laughing Jackass; another Parson Bird; quite a number of Shâmas, oddly enough nearly all hens: and last but not least Mr. Fulljames' La Plata Cuckoos which struck me as the strangest and most noteworthy, though by no means the most taking, of the birds in this class. The very fine Tui which received an extra third should, in my opinion, have been higher up.

The Limit Class contained some very charming birds, such as one does not expect to find in a selling class. One little bird, exhibited by Mrs. Frostick, struck me as specially rare and curious—I understand that it came from the west coast of Africa.

I have felt bound to express myself somewhat strongly about the judging, as it was, in my opinion, on the whole very bad—much worse than it has been in any year since 1894. It may perhaps be urged in defence that the judge put condition before rarity, and that he was right in so doing. But even if this were admitted there would still remain the numerous cases in which the judge preferred common birds to rarer ones *in equally good condition*. The fact is that no birds, whether foreign birds or not, can be judged for condition only, for the simple reason that in a large class at a good Show there are sure to be several entries which are in practically perfect condition, and between which there is nothing to choose on the score of condition only. In classes of mixed species it is impossible to give points for size, shape, or markings, and therefore rarity becomes a most important element. Of two birds in equally good condition there can be no question that the rarer should win—to what extent rarity should be allowed to compensate for slight defects is a more difficult point upon which I need not enter.

(*a*) The more correct name for this species is *Cassicus persicus* (The Japim Hangnest).—A.G.B.

Considering Mr. Abrahams' thorough knowledge and unequalled experience it is strange that his judging should not have been a greater success—it seems to shew that, besides knowledge and experience, an indefinable "judicial instinct" is required to make a good judge.

NOTES ON THE CLASSES OF THE PSITTACIDÆ AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE SHOW.

By O. E. Cresswell.

I will preface these notes with the remark that I do not write as a real authority on Parrots. It had been hoped that Mr. Dutton would be present at the show, and would criticize the Parrot Classes; he was prevented from coming, and I only undertook to supply these notes that our Secretary might be relieved from embarrassment in the matter.

To myself, and I should think to many more, these classes were a veritable treat—two of them at least were super-excellent, and the majority very good; there were some failures, which may suggest different classification for next year.

In the class for "Lovebirds or Pigmy Parrots" the entries were ten in number. The first prize went to a lovely pair of Blue-crowned Hanging Parrots belonging to Mr. C. T. Maxwell; oddly enough, though I watched them on two days, I never saw them hanging. Second went to Mr. Storey's large and handsome pair of Peach-faced Lovebirds; and third to Mr. H. B. Smith's single Ceylonese Hanging Parrot with golden crown (*Loriculus indicus*, I believe); why no notice should have been taken by the judge of Mr. Fulljames' beautiful pair of this same species, I could not understand. Fourth prize was awarded to a pair of Peach-faced Lovebirds (Mr. Fulljames') in singularly good condition. Fourteen pairs of Budgerigars were entered. Mr. Arthur's first-prize pair were unusually large and in beautiful condition; Mr. Cushny's second very good; Mr. Maxwell's third prize pair were Yellow. I cannot pretend to admire this strange variation of colour.

The Class for Rosellas was a failure, the entries being only three. The reason for this may probably be a good one, viz., that Rosellas are more and more kept in aviaries, whence their owners do not care to catch them up. Could they not be classed with Pennants or other *Platycerci*? The first prize was withheld; second went to Mr. C. Martin's fine Mealy; third to Mr.

Housden's Red-headed pair, not in strikingly good trim. Mr. Jeffrey's V. H. C. pair were superb Red-heads, large, and in beautiful condition, but they looked somewhat like two cocks; if so they should not have been V.H.C.! (*a*)

King or Crimson Wings brought eleven entries, nearly all in nice condition. First was Mr. Fulljames' very fine King; second, his lovely Crimson-wing; third, Mr. H. B. Smith's King; I admired, too, the same exhibitor's (V.H.C.) Crimson-wing.

"Ring-necked or Indian" were not a very varied or interesting collection. First went to Mrs. Henderson's grand pair of Alexandrine; Mr. H. B. Smith took second with a pair of Rosas, not in striking bloom; Mr. Railton's Alexandrine, described as 'a grand talker,' secured third prize. Mr. Dutton showed a young Malabar, but not for competition. Mr. Maxwell's Long-tailed Malaccan was in good condition; the species seems nowadays rare.

"Lories or Lorikeets" was labelled by the judge 'a very good class.' About this there can be no doubt—the rarer Lorikeets were especially beautiful and most of them in lovely condition. First was awarded to Mr. A. Green's Ceram Lory—a happy-looking bird, lively and in perfect plumage; its catalogue price—£2 6s. 6d.—was tempting, but Lories are not long lived. Mrs. Frostick won second with a very sweet pair of Musky Lorikeets; Mr. Maxwell third with a pair of Scaly-breasted Lorikeets in excellent condition, and extra third with a single Ornate Lorikeet. There were also good specimens of Swainson's and Forsten's Lorikeets in the class.

The class for "Any other species of Parrakeets (single)" was a decidedly interesting one, with fourteen entries. First went deservedly to Captain Tutton's somewhat rare Fiji Parrakeet (*Pyrrhulopsis tabuensis*), very tame and in lovely condition. The figure of this Parrakeet is somewhat like that of the King Parrot. The head, breast and underparts are maroon, shading downwards into crimson; a brilliant blue patch at the back of the neck, flights and tail blue, and the rest of the body green. Mrs. Astrop took second with her beautiful Pileated Parrakeet, which has before won at the Palace. Third, fourth, and fifth all went to Mr. Fulljames: for a Barraband cock in good trim, a cock Blue Bonnet, and a good Many-coloured. A Red-mantled (*Platycercus erythropeplus*), shown by Mr. Cocksedge, did not obtain any notice. Pairs of "Any other species of Parrakeets"

(*a*) One of Mr. Jeffrey's birds had lost a claw—but in other respects they were superior to Mr. Housden's.—Ed.

brought only six entries. Mr. Housden's glorious pair of Pennant's, in a large cage, gained first; no second was awarded; Mr. Seth Smith took third with a fine pair of Barraband's in perfect trim, and interesting because hens of this species are rarely seen. I admired the brilliant heads of Mr. H. B. Smith's V. H. C. Red-masked Conures (*Conurus rubrolarvatus*). Mr. Maxwell's H.C. pair of Paradise Parrakeets are still in youthful plumage. (*a*)

Grey Parrots were six in number. Mrs. Peacock's winner was in lovely trim, and looked to advantage in a splendid cage; no second prize was awarded, but the third went to apparently an excellent talker, shown by Miss Hatwell. The class for Amazons brought eleven entries. Mr. Hudson won first with a nice-looking Yellow-fronted; Mr. H. B. Smith second with a fine Mealy, and the London Fanciers' Association third with a Levaillant's. I think a pretty little Amazon shown by Mr. Maxwell (V.H.C.) was a 'Spectacled' Amazon not quite in full plumage—a treacherous little fellow, which, after much show of affection, bit me!

In the Class for Eclectus Parrots the entries were, unfortunately, only four, and the first prize was withheld. Second, a small all-green male, said to be "Westerman's Eclectus": in size, it seemed to me more to resemble the nearly-allied *Eclectus riedeli*. Mr. C. Martin is its exhibitor. Third went to Mr. Maxwell's fine Red-sided cock.

"Any other variety Parrots" were eight. Mr. Maxwell took first with a good specimen of the Hawk-headed Parrot; Mr. Fulljames second and third with, respectively, a Bronze-wing and a Meyer's. He also obtained a V.H.C. for his Kea—the well-known Parrot of New Zealand, interesting to naturalists from its having acquired carnivorous habits since the country was stocked with sheep.

Macaws were only five. First, Mr. Fulljames' magnificent Hyacinthine; and third, Mr. Maxwell's Blue and Yellow, in singularly lovely condition. Mr. Fulljames only got a V.H.C. for his rare Spix, probably on account of its poor condition.

"Cockatoos—Lemon-crested, White-crested, or Rose-breasted," were also few. Unfortunately, Mr. Housden's fine

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(*a*) I took these birds to be in adult plumage, and to be two female Golden-shouldered Parrakeets, *Psephotus chrysopterygius*; the misleading brownish cap seems not to be unusual in the adult female of this species. They should have been disqualified. It is to be regretted that the Zoological Society should call this bird the Paradise Parrakeet, a name which has so long been associated in our minds with *P. pulcherrimus*. I think I am correct in saying that it was Gould who called it the Golden-shouldered Parrakeet; and I fail to see any reason why the name should be superseded.—R. P.

pair of Slender-bills, so often winners at the Palace, were apparently entered in error in this class. The first prize was not awarded; second went to Mr. Housden's large Sulphur-crest, and third to the London Fanciers' Association for a Rose-breast.

The Class for "Any other variety of Cockatoo" was much better filled—10 entries. Mr. Fulljames took first for a pair of Gangas, claimed at the catalogue price of £20. They were by no means in full plumage. Second went to Mr. Martin's cock Leadbeater, a very fair specimen; and third to Mr. Maxwell's Ganga: a pair was entered, but only one was in the cage. It is curious that after some interval there seem lately to have been several importations of this species.

The cheap class contained some good specimens and pairs of well-known species, but, as might be expected, nothing very rare.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PARROT NOTES.

SIR,—I have thought that a few notes, disjointed as they will necessarily be, in reply to various items in the Magazine for December, may be of interest.

Firstly, with regard to the Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's ideal of a Parrot pet, I fear his qualifications will never be realized in an individual bird. In respect of size, of course the only Parrots which would comply with the first of Mr. Dutton's conditions would be the Pigmy Parrots. Of these I have two species—the Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot (*Loriculus galgulus*) and the Golden-crowned Hanging Parrot (*Loriculus asiaticus*). (*a*) Both species are very beautiful, and the latter I believe to be exceedingly rare, although I myself have five specimens. Both sorts are messy, stupid (*b*), and do not talk. They do not scream, but they are certainly not tame. They hang in clusters from the top of a "waggon" cage, and the wall on which the cage is hung shows disagreeable evidence of their presence. (*c*)

My own pet, among a collection of more than forty Parrots of different species, is the Bronze-winged Parrot (*Pionus chalcopterus*). It will scarcely be true to say that it does not scream, but its "scream" is a very tiny one, and not at all offensive. Neither does it talk—(I am writing only of my own bird, as it is not easy to speak generally of birds so rare as the Bronze-winged Parrot). In tameness it is far and away the pink of the collection. It positively loves to be "made a fuss of," and when I have it

(*a*) *L. indicus*—the common Ceylonese.—R. P.

(*b*) Not if allowed liberty.—R.P.

(*c*) Mr. Fulljames' use of the term "Pigmy Parrots," to denote the *Loriculi* or Hanging Parrots, is to be deprecated. The true Pigmy Parrots are the *Nasiterninæ*, which constitute the subfamily *Nasiterninæ*, and are, I believe, practically unknown as cage-birds. The Hanging Parrots belong to the subfamily *Palæornithinæ*, and are much more nearly akin to the true Love Birds.—ED.

on my hand, in the presence of a visitor to whom I am showing the peculiarly beautiful colours of the underwing, which are hidden when the bird is at rest, the Parrot utters only the feeblest protest against the liberty I am taking, never dreaming of actively resenting it.

Mr. Dutton asks if anyone can aver with truth that they have a Cockatoo which never screams. In my collection there are two of which I can so speak. The Blood-stained Cockatoo (*Cacatua sanguinea*) has never uttered a sound during the twelve months or so that it has been with me, while the Black Cockatoo (*Microglossus aterimus*) is equally innocent of the fault of screaming, although he is fond of calling out something which sounds like "Papa," and accompanies his effort with a ludicrous attempt at laughing. My bird is very tame, but a sad feather-eater, and every possible remedy has been tried in vain. We have sprayed him daily with a liquid specially prepared to make his feathers distasteful to him, but with only partial success. Even his tail and wing-feathers, which he knows would be painful of extraction, are not safe, for these he takes by the extremity, and strips of their "web," leaving only the quills. I am faintly hopeful of curing him by giving him only small seeds to eat, and plenty of soft wood to make toothpicks of, and if my treatment succeeds I trust to be able, some time hence, to show him in reasonable condition.

I have never kept the Great Green Macaw mentioned by Mr. Dutton, although I have seen it; but the trick of blushing, spoken of by Mr. Dutton as appertaining to this bird, is shared to a remarkable extent by the Black Cockatoo. In repose its cheeks are about the colour of the back of one's hand, but when excited, either with pleasure or anger, they are flushed with a rosy red. He very much enjoys being taken out of his cage, although his formidable beak prevents visitors attempting liberties.

Mr. Dutton's query, as to whether either of our members have kept a Spix Macaw, is answered by Mr. Fillmer's mention of my bird in his report on the foreign birds at the late Royal Aquarium Show. My bird is one of the best-tempered birds in the collection. He delights in being taken in one's hand, and there he will, with very great enjoyment, flap his peculiarly short wings as though he meant to fly to the moon. Upside down or right side up is all the same to him. He says a few words, and could easily be taught to become a good talker if he were not mixed up with a large number of Parrots, each of which has his own idea of harmony.

I cannot quite endorse Mr. Dutton's statement that Hyacinthine Macaws have no individuality. My Hyacinthine is devoted to my housekeeper, and endures me, while he is spiteful to a degree to strangers. I suspect that the latter is due to the fact that strangers are mistrustful of his wonderful beak, and he knows it. With regard to "making a row," Mr. Dutton should hear the daily duet which takes up an hour each morning between my Hyacinthine and the Spix, and he would wish he hadn't. For the rest of the day, both birds are quiet; and I think if they were beyond each other's hearing neither would be objectionable. (*a*)

I quite agree with Mr. Fillmer that the hen Violet Tanager is seldom

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(*a*) We have been obliged reluctantly to omit that part of Mr. Fulljames' letter which continued the discussion of the L. and P. O. Society's Show—as we consider that sufficient space has already been devoted to that subject. We have received other communications upon the same subject which we have refrained from printing, for the same reason.—Ed.

imported. I have bought many freshly-imported birds as hens, and they are now represented in my collection by three survivors, all of which are cocks. I have never had a hen in my possession.

HENRY J. FULLJAMES.

DEALERS' NAMES FOR BIRDS.

I agree with the writers of the letters which have appeared under the above heading in thinking that a glossary of English names of foreign birds would be useful—I doubt, however, whether it would be expedient for the Society to undertake the preparation of such a work at present. I think that if the Society were to publish a glossary, it would be necessary for us to fix upon one English name for each species commonly imported, which should in future be treated by us as the accepted name. The recognition of an accepted English name for every species would be a great convenience, but the selection of the name would, in many cases, be a very difficult and delicate matter, and might possibly cause much dissatisfaction.

Further, it is worth serious consideration whether the preparation of a glossary of dealers' names would not tend to the perpetuation of some names which would be better forgotten, and give a fictitious importance to names scarcely known beyond the circle of the customers of the dealer who invented them.

With regard to scientific names, it has long been an unwritten law of the Society that only those names adopted in the British Museum Catalogue of Birds should be used in the Magazine. This rule has, however, frequently been broken, and there are reasons which make it sometimes difficult to enforce it in practice. I believe it to be the wish of all those engaged in editing the Magazine that it should be more strictly enforced in future.

Personally, I should like, as far as possible, to see the adoption of a uniform system of English names in our Magazine, and I believe that this may in time be gradually brought about. If this were achieved, the adoption by the Society of a list of accepted English names would be easy—at present, I fear it would be hazardous and difficult.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

WINTERING FOREIGN BIRDS IN OUTDOOR AVIARIES.

SIR,—In commenting on Mr. Phillipps' letter in last issue *re* wintering foreign birds out of doors (for, as I read it, it is of general application, and he only mentions Green Avadavats as an instance) I would not pit my small array of facts against his, for I am comparatively young in aviculture, but my experience is quite the contrary to his, and leads me to believe that many birds which will appear puffed and unhappy *in an unheated indoor aviary* (*a*) will, in a garden aviary, open to the atmosphere (of course screened on the North and East) charm their owners (in the winter) with their cheerfulness, vivacity, and song.

(*a*) Mr. Phillipps did not suggest that foreign birds should be wintered in "an unheated indoor aviary,"—his words are "a moderately warm room." It is well-known that birds kept in the open air will stand much more severe cold than those indoors, and that indoor aviaries should always be heated in winter.—ED.

Under such conditions I have kept African Weavers, Green Singing, Ribbon and Zebra Finches, Indian Avadavats and Mannikins, and Java Sparrows in my garden aviary here in London, constructed similarly to an ordinary fowl-run and shed. They have exhibited the demeanour aforementioned, and by it have left no doubt as to their happiness and well-being —*this is actual experience, not belief*—the bath is never absent, and they bathe freely in the most inclement weather.

As already stated in the Magazine, I had a young Java Sparrow hatched on November 6th last, and it is now in the pink of condition, still, of course, in its nest feathers. I have only had two deaths in two years, and these occurred in late summer (one Weaver stuck in the moult and one Java Sparrow in a fit). It seems to me, that these facts speak for themselves, and I fail to see any cruelty in the practice when the birds, by their demeanour and song, most certainly say otherwise. (*a*)

As to Green Avadavats, the Rev. C. D. Farrar has wintered them out of doors, and what is more, bred from them early the following season. I am of the belief that most of the Grass-finches could be so wintered with advantage to themselves, but this I have not yet tried.

WESLEY [illegible]

SIR,—It is naturally with great hesitation that I venture to differ from so experienced an aviculturist as Mr. Phillipps.

If experiments to test the hardiness of birds were certainly foredoomed to failure (and even success of no great importance) they might well be considered cruel; but is the failure such a certainty? Considering the number of birds native to warm climates that are now kept with perfect success in open air aviaries throughout the year, it is not unreasonable to suppose that there are others that would thrive under the same treatment, and it seems to me that to add to the list would be an important service to aviculture. In making experiments to this end I am afraid it is inevitable that there should be victims, but each of these will teach a useful lesson which will justify the apparent cruelty.

A large out-of-door aviary is more within the means of most people than one of similar extent under cover and warmed; birds that do not mind the exposure will surely pass thus a happier existence than confined in cages or small aviaries in a warm bird-room.

Mr. Phillipps' description of birds in cold weather certainly does not apply to my Green Avadavats. I have particularly noticed them on the few days of sharp frost we have had this winter and have always found them as lively, spruce and active as on a bright summer day.

As regards separating the sexes, I advise this, not because the females mind the cold, but because some birds will not learn that our winter is not the suitable season for breeding, and the females, in consequence, get egg-bound. However, most of the species I keep out make no attempt to breed during the winter, and of these there is no necessity to separate the sexes.

(*a*) Mr. Page might have mentioned many more such facts—I could mention many more myself—but I remain unconverted. There is another side to the picture, of which I have too often been an unhappy spectator.—R. P.

I have so far experimented with Virginian, Red-crested and Green Cardinals, Red-headed, Japanese, Nonpareil and Indigo Buntings, *Sycalis arvensis*, Desert Trumpeter Bullfinch, Cherry Finch, Chestnut Finch, Diamond Sparrow, Black-headed Nun, Parson Finch, Zebra Finch, Green Avadavat. Of many of these I have had specimens out for three winters, and cannot see any loss of vitality in them; of those I have lost, I have not been able to attribute the death to cold in any one case, but a Diuca Finch I certainly lost owing to exposure. I judge from Mr. Farrar's notes in the Magazine that he has kept out many other species, and his experience on this would be interesting.

Time only will show whether the lives of my birds are shortened by confinement. In this connection it would be interesting to have fuller statistics than we at present possess of the length of time during which the smaller Finches are generally kept in a warm bird-room.

R. A. Todd.

FOOD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

I see Mr. Marshall was somewhat surprised at a Blackbird being kept on cheese.

In this part of the world, we feed Blackbirds and Thrushes on barley meal made crumbly with water. They may have an occasional snail, but not regularly. On this they thrive and live long. I can answer for it, because I have kept them in this way.

F. G. Dutton.

Sir,—As you invite further correspondence on the subject of Food for Soft-billed Birds, I send you my experience in the matter. I feed my birds on a mixture I make myself, but which I cannot give the receipt for, as I am thinking of making it for sale. I shall be glad, however, to send a limited number of members samples of it on application. In addition to the above mixture, I give raw meat prepared as follows: The meat (mutton for choice) is first scraped or chopped fine; it is then well saturated with water, which is then well squeezed out in the hand. The meat can then be placed in mouthfuls between the bars of the cage or in a pan. I believe this washing of the meat to be the secret of success in feeding on meat, and that it agrees better with birds than when unwashed. Washing the meat before chopping it would not have the same effect. I suppose the juices in unwashed meat are too stimulating. Meat prepared as above may be given *ad libitum* with the greatest benefit. Another advantage gained by the washing is the removal of the stickiness of unwashed meat, which causes too large a quantity to be taken by a bird and wasted about the cage. When raw meat is not at hand I give cooked meat; but I do not consider it as good as raw, nor do the birds care for it as much. I also think some green food every day is desirable, but not necessary.

On the above treatment I have kept birds such as Shâmas, in perfect health and song; also, while in India, an English Nightingale, in perfect health and song for about five years, and probably should have kept him longer if I had not taken him with me to an altitude of about 6,000 feet when he was moulting, and the sudden change from heat to cold was evidently too much for him.

In the December number of our Magazine, Mr. Dutton questions whether in confinement the natural food is best, on the strength of the fact that honey has been found injurious to birds which eat it in a wild state; but may not this be explained by the fact that honey or nectar, as extracted from flowers, is a different substance from honey as stored by the bees? My bee book, speaking of the working bee, says "It has a honey-sack in which the nectar from the flowers is collected, and transformed by a chemical action into honey."

Green Bulbuls I have found do well on my mixture, bread, milk, and soft fruit.

I have not found it necessary to feed my birds at night in winter, as recommended by Mr. Bonhote. My idea is that while birds sleep there is no waste of tissue, and therefore no demand for food. I do not if Miss Hopwood's plan, of making her birds eat green food, is a good one. I find that insectivorous birds do not, as a rule, care for green food. If it is good for them, I don't think they ought to require forcing to take it.

C. HARRISON.

SIR,—It seems more convenient to discuss Dr. Butler's letter on "Bread for Soft-billed Birds" under this heading, as it deals with a branch of the same subject.

Aviculture is not an exact science, and aviculturists always have differed, and probably always will differ, in opinion as to the best foods for various kinds of birds; still, there is such a thing as what may be called the traditional or orthodox doctrine on the subject, and I think everyone will agree that the feeding of British Warblers on food containing bread-crumbs is not in accordance with orthodox avicultural teaching. (a) It seems to me, therefore, that Dr. Butler can scarcely complain of Mr. Fulljames' statement to the effect that the more delicate insectivorous birds cannot digest bread, as that statement is in no way original, and is but an echo of what we have always been taught by those who have hitherto been supposed to know most about the subject. The statement itself may be true or may be false, but it is so well supported by authority that no one need be astonished at its being made, and the onus of proof is on those who controvert it.

There appears to me to be an inherent difficulty in believing that bread is good for insectivorous birds. The ability to digest farinaceous food depends upon the power to convert starch into dextrine; and we are told that young infants, whose natural food is milk, do not possess this power. The natural food of insectivorous birds is insects, and as the power to convert starch into dextrine would be useless to them in a state of nature it seems scarcely likely that they possess it. The advantage of biscuit over bread is that in biscuit a larger proportion of the starch has been already converted into dextrine in the process of baking.

The fact that insectivorous birds will devour considerable quantities of bread without injury to themselves proves little or nothing. Our grandfathers and grandmothers were largely fed, in infancy, on pap, and some

(a) What is orthodox avicultural teaching? Orthodoxy teaches that some fruit-eaters shall be fed on raw meat. To each man orthodoxy is his own doxy.—A. G. B.

apparantly none the worse for it—yet no one would nowadays recommend such a diet for babies.

Birds like the Blackcap and the Garden Warbler, both of which feed largely on berries and fruit, would be much more likely to digest bread than birds which live entirely on insects; and the same applies to a smaller extent to the Nightingale, which is also in some degree an eater of berries. The *Laniarius*, the Blackbird, and the Jays will, as is well known, live on anything—the Nuthatch is almost equally omnivorous, while the Tanagers are mainly fruit-eaters. Therefore scarcely any of the birds mentioned by Dr. Butler come within the meaning of the expression used by Mr. Fulljames—"the most delicate of the insectivorous birds."

SEPTIMUS PERKINS.

SIR,—I have been asked to reply to Dr. Butler's criticism upon my letter in the *Avicultural Magazine* for January.

My statement that Nightingales could not digest breadcrumbs was based upon the fact that, during an experience of nine or ten years, the Nightingale which I now have, and which is singing from daylight until the gaslight is turned out at night, is the only one I have ever been able to keep through the autumn.

About ten years ago I began with two Nightingales, and fed them on a mixture somewhat resembling that mentioned by Dr. Butler in "British Birds, their Nests and Eggs." Both died just as I was expecting them to come into song. I have had never less than one Nightingale each season since then, but they have all died before Christmas in each year. I sent the last two bodies for *post-mortem*, and the report was that the birds had died from some disease (with a Latin name reaching across the page), induced in the first stages by indigestion, consequent upon the birds having been supplied with food which contained breadcrumbs and peameal.

My existing bird has had, since he has been with me, which is since the Crystal Palace Show of 1897, nothing but ants'-cocoons and insects, and his condition at the recent Show of 1898 was, I think, sufficient justification of the treatment. He was singing in his cage during the Show, and held, at times, quite a levee.

Dr. Butler's referring me to "British Birds, their Nests and Eggs" was scarcely a happy thought on his part, for I thereby gather that of the five birds he took from the nest in 1887 three died in about two months, and the fourth and fifth within eighteen months, and he does not mention having tried to keep a Nightingale since. Might I suggest that the presumed "sunstrokes" were *fits* consequent upon injudicious feeding? Anyway, a Nightingale will have nothing but strictly insectivorous food with me.

HENRY J. FULLJAMES.

In connection with the alleged injurious effects of honey on captive birds it is worth mentioning that I have been informed that Mr. Richard, a member of our Society, has kept two specimens of the Yellow-winged Sugar Bird (*Cæreba cyanea*) for some years, in perfect health and plumage, and that these birds have been largely fed on honey—a section of honey in the comb being almost always in their cage.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

THE AGE OF CAGE-BIRDS.

SIR,—From a former member of our Society I obtained a pair of Orange-cheeked Waxbills on the 8th of November, 1889. The cock died on the 17th January, this year, and the hen on the 21st of February, their ages averaging 8¼ years.

I wrote to the lady from whom I purchased them to inquire whether she could tell me how long they had been in her possession, but unfortunately she had kept no record. I presume they must have died of old age, for the person who dissected them could not detect any disease in them.

The wonder to me is that these frail little creatures live so long in confinement. This last survivor was put on the scales, and weighed exactly a quarter of an ounce!

W. T. CATLEUGH.

ZWARTE KIVISPAAL.

SIR,—It seems hardly seemly that so curious and little [illegible]ird as Mr. Russell Humphrys' *Cassidix oryzivora* should be passed over [illegible]our Society without comment, even the owner's note in the Show catalogue that it is "absolutely unique," failing to get a rise out of any of our critics. In the catalogue it is called *Cassidix oryzivoid*; and the error has been reproduced by the different papers with the docility and complacency of sheep playing at Follow-my-Leader over a precipice. I came across an adult male in Holland last summer, where it was known as the Zwarte Kivispaal. It was much the same colour as the adult male Satin Bower-bird, but the head and neck were of a lighter and much more brilliant violet, and the bill and feet were black. Only too conscious of its beauty and of the oddity of its ruff, the conceited creature was blowing out its neck and crop, showing off to perfection the marvellous reflections of the plumage, and the curious long and enlarged feathers at the back. The bird seemed to have a peculiarly small and snake-like head,—but this may have been more apparent than real, owing to the exaggerated size of the neck. It was an irresistibly comic and absurd looking bundle of vanities, and would have been the Bird of the Show had it appeared at the Palace.

I could not exactly make out Mr. Humphrys' unsteady exhibit in its dark cage, and should not have recognised it as a Zwarte Kivispaal (will somebody kindly oblige with the English name?) had it not been for the entry in the catalogue. It seemed not to be wholly black, nor to have the elongated neck feathers or the violet reflections, and the size of the head was ordinary. The female is said to want the neck decorations—but [illegible] bird seemed rather large for a female; so it may have been an imm[illegible] male; and the ill-defined white line which I think I saw over the eye[illegible] have been a mark of immaturity, or one of the variations of pl[illegible] characteristic of the species. It comes from Central and South An[illegible]

REGINALD PHILLI[illegible]

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to members monthly. Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them.

The Secretary would be glad to hear from any medical member of the Society who would undertake *post mortem* examinations of birds for members.

The Magazine is published by Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Limited, of 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., and is dispatched by them monthly to the members. Orders for extra copies, back numbers, and bound volumes should be addressed to them and not to the Secretary.

As has been previously announced, it is intended to issue, this year, a series of at least four hand-coloured plates, similar in style to those which appeared last year. The first plate of the series appeared in December. Members who wish for these *coloured* plates will be asked to pay an extra subscription of 5/-, and, as an additional privilege, will have all their Magazines dispatched by letter-post, and protected by a sheet of straw-board. If the funds of the Society permit, additional plates will be issued without further charge.

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Dr. BUTLER would be much obliged to any members of the Society who would forward dead specimens of any birds, *with perfect wings*, to his private address: as he is studying sexual differences, with the object of assisting aviculturists to sex their birds with certainty.

Mr. ST. QUINTIN having resigned his seat on the Executive Committee (because he expects to be abroad a great part of the year), Mr. SETH-SMITH has been elected by the Council in his place.

The following persons not having paid their subscriptions either for this year or last year, the Executive Committee, in pursuance of Rule 3, have to announce that they have ceased to be members of the Society.

Dr. E. W. ROPER, 86, Beckenham Road, Beckenham.
Miss E. FRANKLYN, Speenhill Lodge, Newbury.

(Continued on page 3 of cover).

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THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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SCIENTIFIC AVICULTURE.

By A. G. Butler, Ph.D.

All hobbies, to be really interesting, should add something to the sum of general knowledge; in other words, should make some new facts known to mankind.

It has been forced upon me lately, by the questions put to me by scientific workers in other branches of Zoological study, that aviculturists are doing far less than they might do towards helping their brethren the cabinet-ornithologists. As a class they seem to think that if they have succeeded in breeding a bird not previously reared in captivity in this country, they have done all that mankind is entitled to expect at their hands.

When a man has been fortunate enough to succeed up to this point, the cabinet-naturalist has a right to expect far more from him; for if he merely records the bare fact, he has indeed been fortunate (and men will doubtless praise him who does good to himself), but he has nevertheless fallen short of that which he ought to have done, and has neglected a golden opportunity of imparting knowledge.

To know a bird thoroughly, it must be studied in both sexes and at all ages; and this, alas, (in spite of the indefatigable zeal of such men as Dr. Russ) has been done in very few of the numerous species which exist on the earth's surface; and not in anything like all of even the commonly imported species.

The aviculturist has it in his power to correct the errors which even careful travellers and cabinet-naturalists have, from time to time, undoubtedly made—respecting the young plumage, or the sexual plumage, the seasonal changes, and the senile plumage, of various species: he has his birds before him from year's end to year's end; he is interested in their habits, in their dances, songs, courtships, nest-buildings, and method of feeding their young; he tells us about these things, all of which give us

pleasure to read about, and perhaps enable some of us to follow in his footsteps; yet, more often than not, the recital of these items adds little or nothing to the sum of facts already recorded in European works.

On the other hand, every new item made known to the world is a distinct gain to mankind: in that it assists in the great scheme of education, in which, whether we recognize it or not, we are all interested.

The first duty of the breeder is to describe the nest, the eggs, the time of incubation, and the nesting plumage of every species reared by him; provided that it has not already been thoroughly done by some previous breeder; then the date at which the young leave their nest should be noted, in order to decide how long this infant plumage is retained; and the change to the adult plumage should be carefully studied.

I know that one objection will at once be raised to this; an objection which never daunted Dr. Russ, and which is based upon an error of observation. It will be said that it is impossible to examine a nest without causing the parents to desert their eggs and young. I can only say that I have lifted down boxes containing nests and eggs of Java Sparrows, Saffron-finches, Zebra-finches and others; have even pulled out the linings and replaced them by cleaner ones, restoring young or eggs after the process, and hanging up the boxes again. I have done this not once but dozens of times, and do not remember ever to have lost a brood thereby.

Some birds, such as Blue Robins, get excited and fly about wildly whilst you examine their young, but no sooner are you out of the aviary than they return to the nest and are as assiduous in their attention to their offspring as before. It is not one deliberate and quiet examination which scares most birds from their duties, but that idle curiosity which tempts some aviculturists to look frequently to see how matters are progressing.

The Zebra-finch above many birds has been credited with foolish nervousness about its nest: I will therefore put on record here one out of many instances in which I have meddled with it. Last year I hung up a cocoa-nut shell among other nesting-receptacles in one of my aviaries; a pair of Zebra-finches soon took possession, and having carelessly lined the shell settled down to rear a family, but only hatched one out of four eggs. One day I noticed that both birds were absent from the nest, so climbing on a bank, I looked into the shell but could see nothing but what seemed to be a little fluff (which I took for lining) at

the back of the shell. I unhooked and turned the shell upside down into my hand, when out fell a young bird about half grown and quite lively. I carried both away, pressed some cow-hair into the back of the cavity, replaced the youngster and hung the shell up again: in five minutes both parents were back feeding their baby, which is now an adult bird. That is about as strong a case as I have met with as regards the Zebra-finch, but I have often done the same thing with Java Sparrows.

Many of our members may perhaps think to back out of their responsibilities, on the ground that they have no aviaries but only a few small birds in cages. Now I will tell them what they can do, if they only have a pair of the common Avadavat in a cage.

It is well known that this commonest of all Indian Waxbills is incessantly changing its plumage throughout the year, but nobody has ever made a careful study of these changes; nobody knows whether they are produced by complete or partial moults, by growth of colour in the feathers themselves, or how long each phase of colour is permanent. It is certain that at some time or other there must be a complete moult, perhaps once, perhaps twice in the year: it is certain that the bird which at one time is in full breeding-plumage, resembles a hen at another time; resembles all kinds of comical mixtures between male and female plumage sometimes, and at other times does not remind one of either sex. A carefully-dated diary describing the metamorphoses of this common bird would be a boon to science, and if undertaken by several independent workers would do much to clear up the mystery which enshrouds this little Waxbill.

THE ROLLER AND ITS FOOD.

By Reginald Phillipps.

I am much pleased to observe that our members have struggled free from the thraldom of seed-eaters and got so far as the Warblers, and that Mr. Fulljames has made a still bolder move to the front by venturing to refer to such an unfashionable bird as the European Roller. It seems to me to be probable that other aviculturists besides myself may have a liking for some of these less known but often highly interesting and attractive species; and that, possibly, our Magazine would be more widely read and more highly esteemed if we were a little less narrow-minded in the choice of our subjects than we sometimes appear to be.

The Roller (*Coracias garrulus*) is not only interesting as a bird and taking as a pet (if properly managed), but it is a subject which our Society ought to take up as a matter of duty. Writers, ancient and modern, have had much to say about the Roller, but few of them seem to have understood its true nature; and, as the moderns seem to be taking a retrogade step, a little discussion about the bird will be timely. And amongst all the writings, ancient and modern, with which I am acquainted, there is but one that even so much as refers to one of the most interesting points in the economy of the bird, a point, too, on which the question of its food partly hinges. Mr. Fulljames, therefore, in asking about food for his Roller, touches on an important subject; and to deal with it, principally though not entirely, will be sufficient for the present paper. (*a*)

Perhaps it may somewhat clear the air if I commence by saying that the more I see of the Roller the more do I disagree with those writers who liken it to our Jay. The Jay is a bold knave, and wary after the manner of clever knaves, but the Roller is neither bold nor a knave; on the contrary, although not exactly wild, it is exceptionally nervous and timid, and (for example) will fast for hours rather than go near its food should any such uncanny object as a dust-broom be lying anywhere near. It is more or less wary according to the circumstances of its lot; in Greece, for instance, I not infrequently came across the feathers but rarely saw the bird, for the natives seemed to have little to do but to shoot at every member of the feathered creation they could find, even a rare Sparrow which ventured to chirp in the outskirts of Athens itself being immediately catapulted by the ubiquitous urchin. On the other hand, I understand that in Palestine and Algeria the Roller is a common and conspicuous object. In some of its ways the Roller is curiously like to its not very distant connection the Laughing Jackass; and on very rare occasions it gives utterance to a short but almost perfect Jackass laugh. Some writers endeavour to describe its different notes, but rather feebly, for its language is varied and expressive, and to my mind distinctly pleasing; nevertheless it is the custom to abuse the voice of the Roller, so there is no more to be said.

It is not a robust bird, and should not be exposed to much cold.

In considering the food of the captive Roller, it must be borne in mind that it is rather an obstinate bird to get on to food

(*a*) See p. 55, last paragraph.

it has not been accustomed to, and that, too often, it has contracted bad habits before it reaches one's hands. In the dealer's shop, it is usually a half-ruined, raw-meat eating creature, seldom attractive, sometimes wholly repulsive; but patience and gentleness bestowed on the Roller will be amply repaid—if you bestow enough.

It is now several years since I received my first Roller. It was little but a bag-of-bones, a bag, by the way, which sorely needed mending, for the skin and flesh had been knocked off the bones by the poor creature's mad batterings against the wires of a most unsuitable cage, and the bones in the bag-in-rags were about all that was left for me to carry home; and many a long day passed before I could get the poor creature decently clothed, but it came to its right mind much sooner than might have been expected. A year or two ago my notice was attracted by some letters about British Birds, in which the Roller was more than once referred to as a suitable species for the Show Bench. I am strongly of opinion that it is about as unsuitable a species as could easily be found, for, as I have already said, it is exceptionally nervous and timid; and without rhyme or reason it dashes about anyhow, anywhere, absolutely regardless of consequences, and of its own and of its owner's feelings.

This first Roller of mine was a specimen of no small interest, for it was a fairly natural bird, and very different from those one usually sees in captivity. In the summer following its arrival, it was placed in the garden along with Hawks, Crows, Jays, and Pies, of many kinds and climes; and it had to be on the alert if it wanted its dinner. Its favourite portions were grapes and cockroaches; and in Greece, by the way, I found the Roller in the vineyards, in the midst of scores of acres of grapes. It also ate worms, mealworms, sop, cooked cabbage, etc. I still have a lively remembrance of this bird, when a plate of scraps from our midday meal was put out, swooping down and seizing upon the cabbage, gulping down huge pieces, almost choking itself in its haste—but it would take a good deal to choke a Roller. Many of the older writers were agreed that the Roller partakes of vegetable food; probably we cannot materially improve upon Wood, who says that the food is "almost wholly of an insect nature, but is diversified with a few berries and other vegetable productions." Modern writers, however, will not allow this, and mostly tell us that the Roller is "purely insectivorous," that "There seems to be no evidence that it ever eats grain, or in fact any vegetable substances," and the

like ; but Seebohm could not have known much about the matter, for he adds :—" Naumann asserts that caged birds, when given any vegetable matter to eat, die from its effects ; but this requires further confirmation." How far modern writers have taken their ideas from one another I will not pause to consider, but one, whom we all respect, now passed away, seems to have taken his ideas all ready formed to the bird ; and his evidence is consequently all the more valuable. He is quoted in " British Birds with their Nests and Eggs " as follows :—" We once discovered some remains of figs in the stomach of a bird of this species, but imagine that they were swallowed unintentionally with some insect food." From what I have seen, I should think that natural fig would be a very likely food for the Roller to partake of ; and the fig tree the bird seems rather to have a liking for. I have more than once seen one of a pair I now have pick up and eat odd pieces of dried fig. Several writers tell us that the Roller feeds on frogs, one adding " smaller mammalia " ; and another says, " It also frequents broad stretches of reeds, which it is said to perch on the look-out for the frogs below. To say the least, these statements are misleading : they give one to understand that the Roller is so far a rapacious bird that it has the power to tear up its prey ; but it has no such power, although likely enough it may swallow baby frogs, and also possibly—not probably—juvenile mice, if not afraid of them ; the sight of a live mouse would scare my Rollers out of their seven senses. A mouse cut up, however, and a callow young bird, would probably be good for a Roller in captivity. The power of the Roller is in its beak ; and it seizes its prey in a vice-like grip, sometimes banging it against its perch with great violence. Moreover, to infer that a Roller would willingly perch upon a reed, and plunge down amongst the reeds after a frog, is to misrepresent its nature. It is, in a sense, a heavy clumsy bird amongst foliage ; it cannot hop from perch to perch but must use its wings, and greatly dislikes going where the tips of its long wings may flap against any thing. It likes to perch on a substantial bough, a bare, dead one from preference, on rocks, large stones, or on some open, solid, raised seat, from which it may look down for beetles, locusts, grasshoppers, or other large insects, on which it will swiftly dive from its watch-post, often returning to the same place. But the statement that it will perch on a reed, even on such gigantic reeds as one meets with in Egypt, is rather difficult to understand. It rarely stops on the ground longer than is necessary for seizing and swallowing its prey ; all the same I quite fail to see that on the ground it is " very clumsy," " grotesque," " hops

with great effort," and so on. When I have a scramble for meal-worms in my aviary, and the Rollers are on the ground with other large birds, I find that they are as active as the best of them, darting about from place to place, and invariably getting the lion's share.

(To be continued).

THE SEX OF PENNANTS.

By the Rev. C. D. FARRAR.

I suppose that the one thing which keeps back amateurs from trying to breed these splendid birds is the difficulty of securing pairs.

Writing of Pennants, Mr. Gedney says, "The inability to recognise any outward distinction of sexes in these birds has deterred many amateurs from attempting to breed them in captivity. Beyond an *imperceptibly* lighter shade upon the breast of the adult hen and a somewhat smaller and more effeminate expression, there is *absolutely no means* by which an inexperienced person could determine the sexes."

Dr. Greene is even more careful not to commit himself. "The sexes," he says, "*resemble each other in size and colouring*, although the tints of the plumage in the female are, *perhaps*, not quite so brilliant as in the male bird."

I can only conclude that Mr. Gedney and Dr. Greene never saw a hen Pennant, otherwise they would never have penned such amazing statements!

There is *absolutely* no possibility of mistaking a hen for a cock Pennant. They are as different, as they say up here, as chalk from cheese. In the first place, the hen Pennant is one-third smaller than the cock, and has a small round head; whereas, he has a somewhat flattened crown. These points *alone* would almost be sufficient to any but a tyro; but when we come to examine the plumage, a mistake is *absolutely impossible*:—

The cock has a rich crimson head extending right over the neck and *cheeks*.

The hen has a head of orange-red shading off into greeny orange on the neck; the cheeks are very pale greeny pink.

The chin of the cock is splendid violet.

The chin of the hen is quite pale violet.

Breast of the cock rich crimson.

Breast of the hen reddy orange, the lower feathers of the breast tipped with green.

Back of the cock, each feather black, edged with rich crimson.

Back of the hen, top part, each feather dull black, edged with a *very* narrow strip of colour like the colour of the *Strand Magazine*, followed by a broader strip of orange-red; the lower feathers are dull black and are edged with green and orange.

Shoulder of cock rich mauve.

Shoulder of hen pale mauve.

Wing of cock dark violet, flights much better colour than in the hen.

Wing of hen fairly dark violet, shaded towards the back with paler mauve, edged with pale orange.

Rump of cock rich crimson; rump of hen orange red.

Tail of cock, outer feathers rich violet, centre black.

Tail of hen violet with *greenish* centre.

Legs of cock black; legs of hen grey.

I may say that nearly all the birds sold as hens are young birds in their *first* feathers—which youngsters are dark green, mottled and splashed with red; but no one who has had a hen would ever be deceived by such. (*a*)

Pennants are most engaging birds. My hen is so tame, although she is in a large outdoor aviary, that she is almost a nuisance. Whenever I go out she at once comes to the edge and begins rubbing her poll on a branch as a gentle hint that she would like a little flowering grass or some green corn in the ear; she will also carry on a little conversation in Pennantese, if I make a kissing noise with my lips. Her lord and master is a bit more suspicious, although absurdly eager to know what is going on and to see what his wife has got. Poor fellow, I expect he remembers the day when he was trapped out in Australia, owing to his enquiring turn of mind.

I find that my Pennants are perfectly hardy, but they don't like too much sun, and quite pant like old hens do at mid-

(*a*.) In the British Museum Catalogue one description alone, of the adult plumage, is given,—had the sexes invariably differed in plumage as Mr. Farrar's birds appears to do a separate description of the female plumage would, in all probability, have been given. Probably Mr. Farrar's hen is in her first *adult* plumage, and her colours will deepen as she gets older.—D. S.-S.

day. They sleep in the covered run during the hottest part of the day, and are most lively in the evening. The cock's note is something like the barking of a dog, and he has rather a nice whistle in spring. I feed my Pennants on hemp and canary seed, and they have a nice grass lawn in the aviary. They are great bathers and delight in getting into a deep pan, and making the water fairly fly. Mine have an aviary to themselves, as do all my Parrakeets, so I cannot say how they would behave in a mixed society.

I have not been successful yet in breeding Pennants, as I could never get a hen: but I quite hope to do so next year, if we live and all goes well.

Pennants are never very plentiful in the market; and I consider that a true pair, and acclimatised, would be well worth £5, in fact I should say cheap.

To keep these big Parrakeets in cages is, I think, barbarous, and besides, you lose all their beauty.

When my hay was ripe last year, my hen Pennant would give me no peace unless I stopped each time and gave her a bundle.

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for any of the opinions expressed or facts stated in this article. The same applies to *all* articles published in the Magazine, but we wish it to be clearly understood in this case, as our personal feeling is that Mr Farrar's conclusions require to be confirmed by the observation of other specimens, besides the pair about which he writes, before they can be accepted.—Ed.]

AVIARY NOTES.

By R. A. Todd.

An appeal from our energetic Secretary to supply him with copy is not always easy to respond to. To write one of those delightful accounts of the life of a bird, or a happy married pair, which so often decorate, and materially add to the interest of, our Magazine, is not within my power.

Having a rather large collection myself, I am sometimes inclined to envy other members of our Society who confine their attention to a select number of favourites, whose behaviour and habits they are, in consequence, able to observe closely and describe in minute detail. Birds, after all, are very like human beings. The solitary man or woman, living his or her individual life apart in his or her appropriate cage, displays various peculiarities or angles fully developed; placed in a crowd, these angles are soon worn off, and members of a large society become very much alike. My birds are all in a crowd, or I should rather

say in several crowds, as in their case the obliteration of angles cannot be allowed to go too far without undesirable and often disastrous results; such differences of habit as there might naturally be between the various occupants of each aviary consequently rather tend to disappear.

Among seed-eating birds, a noteworthy peculiarity is the wonderful strength of constitution of the Weavers. A dead Weaver is almost as uncommon as a dead donkey. I have always been inclined to attribute this largely to their living mainly on canary seed, of which they eat fully four times as much as they do of millet; Indian millet they seem hardly to touch, though they certainly are fond of the spray form. If this is so, however, why is the mortality among the closely related Whydahs, which also live mainly on canary seed, so much greater? It is true it is chiefly the Pintailed and Paradise Whydahs that I have found difficult to keep, the Pintails going off without any apparent cause, and the Paradise cocks never surviving their second moult out of colour (the hens are hardy enough); but moulting with them is hardly a more severe operation than it is with many of the Weavers whose health is hardly ever affected by it, and the Red-collared and Yellow-backed Whydahs moult without difficulty.

It has been suggested that Weavers owe their longevity in confinement to their never, or very rarely, attempting to breed, and this is probably the correct explanation. Out of a fairly large number of species, I have only once had a nest of the Orange Weaver; one young one was hatched but not reared. My cock Oryx is of a decidedly amatory disposition, but always selects as the object of his affections a hen Orange or Napoleon Weaver, both of which treat his advances with undisguised aversion; his own hen he entirely neglects.

While on the subject of Weavers, has it ever been remarked that the species in which the cock is mainly black in summer plumage are the earliest to come into colour? I have at present *Pyromelana capensis* in full colour, and *Urobrachya axillaris* and *bocagii* nearly so, though strangely *P. c. minor* is still in its winter plumage. Of those in which red or yellow predominates, *Foudia madagascariensis*, *Nesacanthis eminentissima* and *Ploceus atrigula* are half in colour, but no other species has commenced the change yet. The Combassou seems most irregular in this respect; my solitary cock has been in full colour for twelve months since he first came into colour as a young bird. Of the Whydahs, the Red-collared Whydah (*Penthetria ardens*)

is nearly in full colour; the collar seems to become redder as the bird gets older; when I first had my specimen, over two years ago, it was of yellow orange colour.

There are two Weavers against which I ought to warn all aviculturists with susceptible ears: I refer to *Hyphantornis cucullatus* and *H. spilonotus*. They are undoubtedly handsome birds, and their weaving is highly interesting; but they screech as cacophonously as any Parrot and they do it almost unceasingly throughout the day, added to which their tempers are the reverse of amiable. They both have a curious habit of from time to time, as it were, running amuck through the aviary, shrieking at the top of their voices; this, however, does not appear to frighten the other birds, who only just get out of their way till they calm down again. I have only noticed this habit during the summer. Last year a hen *H. aureiflavus* took possession of a nest nearly completed by *H. spilonotus* and proceeded to line it with feathers; the bigger bird, in spite of his unamiable temper, never attempted to drive her out, but contented himself with fluttering round the nest or sitting on a neighbouring twig as long as she was in occupation, hurling abuse at her in language totally unfit for publication; this apparently got on her nerves at last, and she abandoned her design of rearing a family —the nest was soon afterwards destroyed.

This habit of pulling their nests to pieces almost as soon as they are finished seems to be a regular practice with the African Weavers, and it makes a terribly untidy litter all over the aviary. My Indian Weavers have never done any building (they are all bachelors); possibly grass, which is the only material I supply for the purpose, does not suit them, though the African species highly appreciate it. (*a*) I should mention, however, that the Madagascar Weaver also will not use grass, and has never built with me though he has a wife to help him; according to Dr. Russ this species prefers aloe or Agave fibre.

It seems that birds which build without the artificial support of a nesting-box require a stronger material than grass or hay; except perhaps such birds as the Buntings, which build very strong open nests with the tough flowering stems which are naturally far stronger than the leaves. My Pied Mannikins built once a beautiful nest of aloe fibre which lasted for several months, but since they have only been supplied with hay their successive nests are destroyed as soon as made. However, I have

(*a*) My Indian Weavers, also batchelors, have built very strong and quite opaque nests with hay alone.—A. G. B.

a wholesome dread of aloe fibre, after having had some valuable birds entangled and hung by it, and never use it now.

It is astonishing what an immense quantity of hay the small Ornamental Finches can dispose of. In my aviary set apart for these there are about fifty birds; I give them a good handful of hay almost every day, all of which gets tucked into their nesting boxes, only the shortest pieces being unappropriated, and they are always ready for more.

The cock *Sycalis arvensis*, in an open air aviary, has just begun to sing. I know of nothing that so closely resembles his song as saw-sharpening, of all sounds the most shrill except, perhaps, the Bat's cry. It is a bright and active bird, but its music is too excruciating. I should be glad to come across an undoubted female, as they should breed.

An incident that occurred a few days ago with me is interesting in reference to the question of the hardiness of tropical birds. My Shâma, being almost more than tame, is allowed the free run of the bird-house, and late one frosty afternoon he slipped out into the garden as the door was opened. Though as a rule he comes to me very readily, on this occasion he absolutely refused to be caught and flew away out of sight, and I was not able to secure him until the next morning. There was sharp frost that night, the thermometer registering 22° F., but my bird has not shown the slightest ill effects from the cold and exposure, though since he has been in my possession he has never known a lower temperature than about 50° F. Doubtless, however, it would not be safe to argue from this incident that the Shâma can be kept in an open air aviary during the winter.

I have recently acquired a Dhyal Bird, which entirely belies the reputation I have seen given to the species of being excessively shy and nervous in disposition (*a*). My bird may be the exception that proves the rule, as he is most bold and confiding, taking mealworms (of which he is inordinately fond) from my hand or pecking at my fingers if I don't offer him one, and whenever I approach his cage he comes close up to the wires to see if I am bringing him anything. His close relationship to the Shâma is evident in his every movement and gesture, but he is a larger bird and perhaps not quite so handsome. He has not given me much opportunity of criticising his singing powers, which are said to be at least equal to those of his near relative. I feed these birds on a mixture of Abrahams' food, dried yolk,

(*a*) This bird is notoriously bold, even in its wild state.—R.P.

and ants'-eggs, with a little potato, giving also a few mealworms and cockroaches daily. On this food my Shâma has thriven for nearly three years; and his recent escapade, as just related, proves that he is by no means in feeble health; often, for weeks at a time, he entirely refuses mealworms (his customary allowance is six or seven a day), and cockroaches are then his only insect-food. He has never had meat in any form, as it seems to me most inappropriate food for an insectivorous bird.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FOOD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Septimus Perkins, I fail to see that because "the ability to digest farinaceous food depends upon the power to convert starch into dextrine" the most delicate insectivorous birds, such as the English Warblers, are therefore necessarily unable to digest bread. If any of these birds did, as he suggests, live entirely upon insects in a wild state, there would be something in his argument, but they *do not*.

Probably the most delicate of all the English Warblers is the Goldcrest, which, in addition to insect food, swallows both seeds and berries; nor do I know of one Warbler (the natural food of which is known) which does not eat the smaller berries, such as elderberries.

Mr. Perkins' mention of the Nightingale is unfortunate for his argument, because this bird is the one species upon which the discussion arose, and of which Mr. Fulljames said that it could not digest biscuit or bread crumbs. Now Mr. Perkins not only thinks that the Nightingale, being accustomed to swallow a certain amount of cellulose, may be expected to convert a certain amount of starch into dextrine; but he further admits that biscuit, being already partially converted, is almost (if not altogether) a suitable food for the more delicate insectivorous birds. (*a*)

After all, the best argument that can be used for or against any food is experience. Mr. Fulljames found that Nightingales fed partly on bread died before the end of the first year of captivity; and he fairly calls my attention to the fact that my birds did not live more than eighteen months; still eighteen months represent a good period in which a bird is discovering that it "will not eat and cannot digest" that which it has eaten and digested for a year and a half.

As to the suggestion that my Nightingales died of fits: all I can say is that those fits curiously resembled heat apoplexy, and did not in the least look like fits resulting from indigestion.

A. G. BUTLER.

SIR,—Dr. Butler asks "What is orthodox avicultural teaching?" I am not enamoured of that phrase, which I adopted on the spur of the

(*a*) This letter by Dr. Butler is written in answer to Mr. Perkins' letter in the Magazine for March. Dr. Butler's reply to Mr. Perkins' letter published this month will be found on page 114.—ED.

moment for want of a better, but I will try to explain what I meant by it. There are many questions in aviculture which remain open, but there are some upon which there exists a more or less complete concensus of opinion. For instance, no one disputes that the staple food of Waxbills should be white-millet seed, or that Parrots require water to drink. When I say that no one disputes these things, I mean, of course, no one whose opinion is entitled to the respect of experienced aviculturists. With regard to the feeding of the more exclusively insectivorous birds, it is impossible to assert that "no one disputes" that the diet should be non-farinaceous; but I think I am justified in saying that, with the single exception of Dr. Butler, all competent modern authorities take that view; and if I may so far trespass upon space I will venture to give a few quotations to prove this.

In "Song Birds of Great Britain" Dr. Greene writes,—"My Nightingale's food consists of as many dried ants'-eggs as it chooses to eat, eight or ten mealworms daily, or rather on alternate days, and in the interval the same number of blackbeetles, which it appears to equally enjoy, a little green food in the shape of chopped lettuce, and cooked mutton cut up very small, about three times a-week."

The late Dr. Bradburn, in his most valuable little book on British Birds, says,—"The food must be soaked ants'-eggs as a staple: there is nothing to touch them. Avoid all pastes and messes if you would have strong healthy birds. Nightingales will live on good ants'-eggs and half-a-dozen mealworms per day, and keep in grand condition all the year round." He then goes on to mention various things which may be given by way of a change, none of them, however, in the least resembling breadcrumbs.

I have purposely selected for quotation writers who are not members of our Society. With regard to our own members it is sufficient to point out that not one of them who has taken part in this discussion on "Food for Soft-billed Birds" supports Dr. Butler in his advocacy of bread for Nightingales and other warblers. Dr. Butler appears to be in a minority of one.

I am anxious not to be misunderstood. I do not wish for one moment to suggest that the knowledge or experience of Dr. Greene or Dr. Bradburn or anyone else is greater than that of Dr. Butler. I simply want to shew that the concensus of opinion is against him: in other words, that his contention is contrary to "orthodox avicultural teaching."

It may be that Dr. Butler is right and everyone else wrong, but it is clear that he is the heretic, and not those who condemn breadcrumbs. This is all I undertook to shew.

SEPTIMUS PERKINS.

SIR,—If I understand Mr. Perkins rightly, he regards the opinions of Dr. Greene and the late Dr. Bradburn as orthodox. I do not. I will say nothing more respecting the former gentleman lest it should be imagined that I have a personal objection to him (which is not the case). With regard to the late Dr. Bradburn, his opinion was based upon experiments carried on in one direction only, and he was far from correct in some of his views; he was a strong advocate for the use of chopped beef for soft-billed birds, and that is certainly an error in the opinion of many aviculturists of the present time.

Mr. Perkins will find, if he looks through the letters on soft food which have been published in the Magazine, that I do not stand alone in my advocacy of bread as an article of diet in soft food mixtures: moreover, if he will get a tin of Abrahams' food for soft-billed birds, he will find that this gentleman (than whom no living authority has had more experience) recommends that his food be mixed with double its bulk of stale bread-crumbs.

I think it possible that the more delicate Warblers would do better with less bread than I have generally given them; for when I reared the Sedge-Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat they died from apoplexy; being found (when skinned) to be abnormally fat: they therefore not only digested bread, but it proved too nourishing for them.

A. G. BUTLER.

SIR,—The Nightingale, Blackcap Warbler, Larger and Lesser Whitethroat, Redstart, Wheatear, Wagtails, Tits, Flycatchers, Larks, etc., can be kept in the best of health on ants'-eggs (or more correctly, cocoons), mealworms, blackbeetles, crickets, flies, spiders, butterflies, moths, mothworms, caterpillars, gentles, flesh maggots, woodlice, wasp grubs, etc.

Mealworms I always render helpless by incising them behind the head with a sharp knife before putting in the cage. Beetles, crickets and woodlice I usually kill by scalding with boiling water before giving to the birds.

Wasp-nests may be procured in the summer from artizans in the country districts, who take a delight in hunting for them, and seem well satisfied with sixpence to one shilling per nest, according to the size. I make it known to the country workmen that I am open to buy a few nests of wasps at prices named above, and soon the men come in with their pocket-handkerchiefs full of them. They are just taken and all alive, but the winged wasps are stunned and so made helpless by the "fuse" which is used to keep them off whilst the nest is being taken. I at once put the nests into a hot oven and bake them until they are nearly brown, and then remove them from the oven, put them on an old tray on the top of the oven or cooking stove, drying them until all moisture has disappeared. If the grubs will rattle when a cake is shaken about, they can then be stored away in baskets or boxes in a dry place. Be sure they are thoroughly dried before they are stored away, or they will become mouldy and spoil. They can be used dry, powdered, or after being steeped in boiling water.

Other insects can be given when they are plentiful. No one need despair of keeping soft-billed British birds in good health and condition, in a favourable temperature, with such a bill of fare to select from. Ripe fruit and dried fruit may be offered occasionally as a luxury.

I have kept several Nightingales and other soft-billed British birds in the best of health and condition, and won with them at most leading shows in Great Britain, and have fed them on one or more of the items specified. My Nightingales would sing almost as soon as unpacked in a show-room. The Secretary from Carlisle Show, on one occasion, sent me a post card saying that his Committee sat listening to my "Gale" until the early hours of the morning after they had unpacked him at about 10.30 the night previous.

CHAS. HOULTON.

SIR,—Your inviting correspondence on this interesting subject, some time ago, emboldens me to write and give my experience. My soft-billed birds now consist of four cock Song Thrushes, a Blackbird, a Skylark, an American Mocking Bird, and a Nightingale; and my staple food for them is hard-boiled egg and breadcrumbs, stirred together with a three tined fork, to which I add ants'-eggs and *slightly* crushed hemp, and mix lightly together so that the birds can pick out, without difficulty, what they like best. The Nightingale and Mocking Bird get a dozen or more mealworms each every day, and the Lark coarse oatmeal and canary seed. The Thrushes are very fond of Spratt's dog biscuit soaked in gravy from a bullock's head, which I boil for my dogs. When the weather is warm, I give them all gentles; and the way I produce them is this: I buy about a pound of cheap foreign beef for 3d., put it in the sun for about two days, then put it in a large flower pot and fill the pot up with garden mould—after ten days I find nothing but fine gentles and mould. I have them sifted through a cinder sieve into a Nestlé's tinned milk box, and throw a trowelful into the aviaries every day.

As bread is rather relaxing for birds, I substitute, occasionally, barley-meal made crumbly with milk, and scraps of sponge cake, which can be bought cheap.

A. JONES.

BREEDING INSECTIVOROUS BIRDS.

SIR,—As the Spring advances, some of us, mindful of failures in the past, are anxiously considering how we may command greater success in the approaching breeding season. In this connection, it would probably be of great advantage if those aviculturists who have succeeded in rearing some of the more difficult subjects would explain their methods. I for one should be very greatly obliged for any practical hints of a system of management which has proved successful in rearing any of the foreign insectivorous birds.

I have a beautiful pair of Rock-thrushes just passing their second Winter in an open aviary. They are in the highest condition, and the male is fast acquiring his handsome breeding-dress of cobalt blue and bright chestnut. Last Summer young were twice hatched; and, if my mealworms had held out, I have no doubt the young would have safely left the nest. But the parents would take nothing but certain insects to the young, and not even flies or small earthworms; and as, while insects were being given, they themselves would not look at their usual mixture of artificial food, the drain upon my store of mealworms was considerable; and at the time (May and June) they were hardly to be obtained, and not at all at short notice. In the end the mealworms, and such wireworms, centipedes and woodlice as I could collect, gave out, and the young died. The birds went to nest again at once, and I accumulated a small supply of mealworms in readiness; but they were soon exhausted, and all the young died, except one which I took at nine days old and endeavoured to rear by hand.

However, I suppose the youngster had been left too long in the nest, for it was curiously wild and stubborn, though two young Song-thrushes of the same age, placed with it as companions, were easily reared; for the whole of the succeeding week the Rock-thrush obstinately refused to open

his beak, and had to be crammed. In the end it suffered from some derangement of the intestines, and succumbed.

A neighbour of mine, last Summer, lost three broods of Shâmas from the same cause—inability to keep up a supply of fresh insect food. I have seen it stated that Mr. Phillipps has reared Shâmas. If he would be so kind as to say how he managed this, I feel sure many of our readers would be grateful (*a*).

I am inclined to think that it may be best in a similar case to take the young at a week old, and try to rear them on a diet of scraped lean meat, egg, and such insects as are obtainable; but of course it would be more satisfactory if one could help the old birds to carry out their parental duties.

W. H. St. Quintin.

THE ORNAMENTED LORIKEET

BIRD SHOWS

A

THE SHÂMA AND DHYAL BIRD.

SIR,—May I ask the name of the beautiful Lory at the Palace Show—"V.H.C., 2,137, Mr. C. T. Maxwell, cock, £5"? Roughly describing it, it had a rather dark speckled red and black throat, and green back, and, as regards colouring, took my fancy more than any other.

Might I suggest that at such an important Show (visited by aviculturists from all parts of the Kingdom, many of whom see some of the birds for the first time), the label or catalogue, or both, should give the name of the exhibit. Nearly all Mr. Maxwell's exhibits were just catalogued "cock," which is no doubt enough for the experienced, but judging from the host of questions put to me throughout the day that I spent there, scores of visitors had come up to learn as well as see, and must have felt equally disappointed with such scant naming of dozens of beautiful birds.

There were, of course, numerous outsiders drawn by mere curiosity to see a lot of strange birds, and it is unfortunate for this class of visitors when the label gets on the wrong cage, which happened in several cases. I heard a man explaining to his wife that "It was the first time he had ever seen a Nightingale." Then they began to take an inventory of the bird: they "Never expected to see such a small bird, and what a dark coloured head!" Not wishing them to take home a wrong impression, at the risk of being thought impertinent, I pointed out that the label had been transposed with that of a Blackcap and that Mr. Gale tenanted the next cage.

May I also ask what is the difference betwen a Shâma and a Dial or Dhyal bird? Dr. Greene classes them as the same bird, but I have seen them catalogued at two different prices in the same list, and can only suppose the Shâma to be an Indian, and the Dial a Malay or East Indian variety of the same bird. If they are different birds are their habits and song similar?

A. A. Pearson.

(*a*) Certainly—in a month or two.—R.P.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Pearson.

The Lorikeet referred to was a specimen of *Trichoglossus ornatus*—the Ornamented Lorikeet. A coloured plate of this species, with an article by Dr. Simpson, appeared in the Magazine last year.

People who have had no personal experience of exhibiting sometimes fail to understand that the catalogue is made up from the entry forms, and that these are filled up by the exhibitors themselves, so that the exhibitors and not the managers of the Show are responsible for the omission of the names and for the transposition of exhibits. Exhibitors, I believe, seldom keep copies of their entry forms, although it is most important that this should be done when more than one entry is made in a class. In the absence of a copy of the entry form it is almost impossible to attach the labels to the cages in the right order.

When Dr. Simpson and I acted as Show Secretaries we made a practice of sending (with the labels) to each exhibitor who had made more than one entry in the same class, a list of such entries with the numbers of the labels, so as to insure their being attached in the right order. This involves a good deal of extra trouble, and it is almost more than can be reasonably expected from the Secretary of a Show.

Another cause of incorrect cataloguing is that if a bird, entered for a Show, dies or goes out of condition before the Show, the exhibitor generally substitutes another bird, often of a different species. In order to avoid this many large exhibitors do not give the names of the species on the entry forms, and it is certainly better that there should be no name at all than a wrong one. The Crystal Palace Catalogue has always been especially incorrect, because the entries have to be sent in so long before the Show.

I have thought it worth while to explain these matters, as although they are well understood by exhibitors they are often puzzling to others.

The Shâma (*Cittocincla tricolor*) and the Dhyal Bird (*Copsychus saularis*) are nearly allied but absolutely distinct species.

There was an illustrated article on the Shâma by the Rev. H. D. Astley, in the Magazine for February. The male Dhyal Bird is black and white—somewhat like a small Magpie—it is figured in the "Royal Natural History." I hope that before long one of our members who has kept this charming bird will give us an article upon it—I should be very glad to receive such an article. The Shâma is a much finer songster than the Dhyal Bird, but I should say that the latter is a much bolder and more inquisitive and amusing bird.

It is difficult to understand how the strange confusion of these very different birds could have arisen, but I believe that "Favourite Foreign Birds" was written against time, under great pressure from the publishers. The mistake was corrected in the second edition. Dr. Greene is not a safe guide on questions of nomenclature, classification, and sexual and specific differences, but this fact should not blind us to the great services he has rendered to aviculture. His books were for a long time almost the only avicultural literature in the English language; he did, for many years, more than any other man to popularise the study; and his teaching on

questions of food and general management is almost always sound and practical. After all "treatment" is *the* important matter to the aviculturist.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

THE PLUM-HEADED PARRAKEET.

SIR,—I had a pair of birds sent me this morning, and as I know nothing about them I thought I would ask you about them.

They are called "Plum-headed Parrakeets," I think. They are short thick green birds, and both their heads are a sort of grey colour. I have only an unheated outdoor aviary. I will put a few questions which I shall be greatly obliged if you will be kind enough to answer.

(1) Are they a pair? (2) Will they live out of doors? (3) Will they breed? (4) What food?

M. BLANCHE LANCASTER.

The following reply was sent to Mrs. Lancaster:

(1) When first imported, the Plum-headed Parrakeet (*Palæornis cyanocephalus*) is often as you describe; but it should turn into a rather long slim bird, the two central tail-feathers being especially long: a young female may sometimes be distinguished by the shorter tail. As they grow older, the beautiful colours on the head of the male, and a *black* collar, will enable you to distinguish the sexes. When young, to distinguish the sexes is often very difficult. Look carefully at the wing (when closed), rather high up towards the bow, and see if there is any sign of a dark reddish-brown spot. If both birds have the spot, they are probably two males; if neither has a spot, they are almost, though not quite, certain to be two females. Rose-headed Parrakeets (*P. rosa*) are often confused with the Plum Heads; and the females of these have the wing spot as well as the males. Both the males and the females sing.

(2) They are not robust when first brought over, but, as soon as acclimatised, can stand a good deal of cold; nevertheless, those I have kept never seemed to like much of it. If your aviary is well sheltered from the cold winds, and is large enough to enable them to fly about freely, they may do fairly well; but this year they should not be put out at any rate until May.

(3) Yes, under favourable circumstances they breed readily; but your birds cannot be expected to breed this year.

(4) Chiefly canary seed, with a little white millet. They are usually very fond of spray millet. A *little* plain dry biscuit, crumbled small, may be mixed with the canary seed. A few good oats may be given occasionally, but hemp very sparingly. When nesting, sop squeezed rather dry may be given, and more biscuit, as then the male feeds the female, and is all the better for a little help.

The more care you take of your two birds this year, the stronger they are likely to be in the future.

R. PHILLIPPS.

THE PALACE SHOW.

CASSIDIX ORYZIVORA.

SIR,—I would suggest that in future a little more supervision be exercised in the printing of the Palace Catalogues; I may possibly have been an unfortunate exception, but two gross errors appeared in my entries. One entry came out of the printer's hands as a Racquet-tailed Drongo, and what should have been *Cassidix oryzivora* was transformed into *oryzivoid!* From a letter I received immediately preceding the Show, I gathered that special arrangements had been made with a view to assisting the reporters to present a fairly intelligent account of the exhibition to the public: one cannot reasonably expect them to do otherwise than accept the catalogue as correct, but surely those who are deputed to take the reporters round should not knowingly perpetuate such palpable printer's errors.

With regard to the example of *Cassidix oryzivora* sent to the Palace, I am inclined to agree with Mr. Phillipps that it is an immature male, but cannot explain the curious ill-defined ring of white round the eye. In the examples of this bird at South Kensington, the white feathers are entirely wanting. Mr. Dresser, who saw this bird some few weeks before the Show, took them to be either a mark of immaturity or the result of climatic influence.

At home in his own cage, this bird is very quaint—he has the curious habit, mentioned by Mr. Phillipps, of blowing his feathers out in a most ridiculous manner, usually at feeding time. He is very peaceful towards other birds, having occupied an outdoor aviary all last summer with a collection numbering over thirty, all smaller than himself, among them being several tiny Tanagers. In the autumn, when the birds were removed to their winter quarters, he was left to share the place with some game Bantams, and during the cold weather he always went to roost with a Bantam tucked snugly each side of him.

He will eat almost anything, but has a great partiality for hemp seed and mealworms.

These birds inhabit Central and South America from Southern Mexico to Peru and Paraguay.

RUSSELL HUMPHRYS.

(*Continued from page 2 of cover*).

MEMBER DECEASED.

On the 13th February, 1898, at Bremen, D. MEINERTZHAGEN, Junr., of Mottisfont Abbey, Romsey, Hants. Elected December, 1896.

The following is quoted from the *Times*.—Mr. MEINERTZHAGEN was "a young man who gave real promise of future distinction. . . . Young as he was he had a remarkable collection of Raptores, and was recognised as a companion in tastes and studies by that great authority on hawking, Lord LILFORD. Last summer the young enthusiast spent with a friend on the shores of the North Cape, and brought home an unprecedented collection of sea birds' eggs and skins of rare sea fowl, with the overplus of which he was enabled to enrich some of our national museums. So competent an authority as Sir WILLIAM FLOWER is known to have expressed his regret that the young student could not enter his service instead of pursuing the career of a merchant. He was destined to do neither. Leaving Oxford to enter the great firm of F. HUTH & Co., of which his father is leading partner, he went to Bremen to perfect himself in German, and died there, after an illness of two or three days, at the age of 22."

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

Mr. FRANK BOOTH, North Bar Without, Beverley.
Mrs. LESLIE WILLIAMS, 8, George Street, Bathwick, Bath.
Miss PHILLPOTTS, Elmhurst, Canterbury.
Miss HOLMES, Elmhurst, Canterbury.

NEW MEMBERS.

Miss K. EDWARDS, 140, Lower Addiscombe Road, Croydon.
Mrs. R. O. LAMB, West Denton, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
Mr. E. LE HEUP COCKSEDGE, Beyton Grange, Suffolk.
Captain HAROLD BLACKETT, Pine Wood, Sunning Hill Village, Berks.
Mr. WILLIAM EDWARD, Abergele Road, Colwyn Bay, N. Wales.
Mr. GEORGE CARRICK, Strathearn Cottage, Saltcoats, Ayrshire.

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION.

Mr. PERCY WADHAM, Holyrood Street, Newport, Isle of Wight.
Proposed by Mr. DALY.

Miss CONSTANCE L. COLLIER, 210, Adelaide Road, Hampstead Road, N.W.
Proposed by Mr. CRESSWELL.

Miss E. E. WEST, The Homestead, Hawthorne Road, Bickley Park, Kent.
Proposed by Mr FILLMER.

Mrs. ARTHUR WALKER, 48, Cranley Gardens, S. Kensington, S.W.
Proposed by Miss BROWNE.

Mr. JOHN HENRY ALFRED REAY, Rosemount, Wallington, Surrey.
Proposed by Mr CRAFER.

MEMBERS' SALE AND EXCHANGE COLUMN.

The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 7 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable. Each advertisement should be written on a separate sheet of paper, with the name and address of the advertiser at the foot.*

Pair Peach-faced Love-birds in good feather, 20/-.
G. E. BOUSKILL, The Hollies, Buxton Road, Stockport.

English-bred Bengalese, adult, 7/6 pair; also hen cockatiel, 6/-, perfect condition. Miss BRAMPTON, Moat House, Brentwood.

Cock Violet-cheeked Waxbill (*Granatina granatina*) healthy and in perfect feather, £10.
HENRY J. FULLJAMES, Brooklyn, Elmbourne Road, Balham.

South American Blue-hooded Jay, very tame, good plumage, from outdoor aviary, 15/-; hen Zebra-finch, has reared young, one foot deformed otherwise perfect, 2/6; pair Red-faced Lovebirds, 12/6; pair Grey Java Sparrows, 3/6. W. BUTTON, The Nursery, Station Road, Corsham Wilts.

(*Continued on page 4 of cover*).

SALE OR EXCHANGE.—*(Continued from page 3 of cover).*

Two pairs Grey Java Sparrows, 3/- pair; cock Madagascar Love-bird, 7/6; hand-reared cock Song Thrush, in full song, 10/-; crested cock Canary, 7/6, German hen, 3/-, both paired for breeding. All acclimatised and in good health and plumage.
A. JONES, 85, Sidney Road, Homerton, London.

Owing to overcrowding have following to dispose of—One cock Violet Tanager in song; one Red Tanager (*Tiuagra rubra*); one Superb; one cock Mocking-bird; one American Thrush, two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks; one Andaman Starling; one Rose-coloured Pastor; one cock Malabar Green Bulbul; pair Black-crested Yellow Bulbuls, very rare; one Tui-bird; one Blue Pie. What offers for lot or separate?
RUSSELL HUMPHRYS, Lingdale, Bickley, Kent.

Pair Orange-cheeked Waxbills, 3/6; pair Striated Finches, 4/-; hen Cordon Bleu, 2/6; hen White Java Sparrow, 7/-; Madagascar Weaver, in full colour, 4/-; cock Peach-faced Love-bird, 10/-; pair Cockatiels, 12/6; fine adult Budgerigars, 8/6 per pair; Zebra Finches, 5/6 per pair; Ribbon Finches, 4/- per pair. Rush nests, 6d. each, 5/- dozen. Husks properly prepared for Budgerigars, etc., 6d. each, 5/- per dozen.
C. P. ARTHUR, Melksham.

Pair Cockatiels, 12/-; Cock Turquoise, 30/-.
W. TOPHAM, Spondon, near Derby.

WANTS.

(These are charged for at the same rate as birds for sale).

Two Russian Bullfinch hens.
W. O. LOTT, 8, Lansdowne Road, Stockwell.

Hen Vinaceous Dove, in exchange for pair Peaceful Doves.
Miss M. SHARP, Ringwood, Hants.

Pair of Rosellas from outdoor aviary.—Mrs. LANCASER, Burnside, Walsall.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to members monthly. Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them.

The Magazine is published by Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Limited, of 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., and is dispatched by them monthly to the members. Orders for extra copies, back numbers, and bound volumes should be addressed to them and not to the Secretary.

As has been previously announced, it is intended to issue, this year, a series of at least four hand-coloured plates, similar in style to those which appeared last year. The first plate of the series appeared in December. Members who wish for these *coloured* plates will be asked to pay an extra subscription of 5/-, and, as an additional privilege, will have all their Magazines dispatched by letter-post, and protected by a sheet of straw-board. It is hoped that the second plate will appear in June.

A meeting of the Council was held at the Arundel Hotel, Victoria Embankment, W. C., on Saturday the 23rd of April, at which Dr. BUTLER, and Messrs. FILLMER, MARSHALL, MEADE-WALDO, PHILLIPPS, SETH-SMITH., and WIENER were present.

The following can be obtained from Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Ltd., at the prices named, which include postage:

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(Continued on page 3 of cover).

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

DEAR SIR OR MADAM,—

It has been found that the practice of issuing plates with the Magazine in two states, hand-coloured to those members who pay an extra subscription of 5/- per annum and black and white to others, causes much trouble to every one concerned and has many disadvantages.

It is therefore proposed that the special subscription for coloured plates shall next year be abolished, and that coloured plates shall be supplied to all members without extra charge, and further that *all* members shall have their Magazines forwarded to them by *letter* post, protected from injury by a sheet of strawboard. In order to meet the additional expense of this new departure, it will be necessary to raise the annual subscription to the Society to 7/6, and to raise the price of the Magazine to non-members correspondingly. Before deciding upon this course, the Council wish to give the members an opportunity of expressing their views upon the subject. I shall therefore be much obliged if you will kindly sign the form at the foot of this circular and return it to me.

In the event of this proposal being carried out, it is most probable that high-class chromos will be issued next year instead of hand-coloured plates, as when a large number of copies are required they are somewhat cheaper, and on the whole more satisfactory.

It is hoped that the proposed alteration may lead to a large increase in the sale of the Magazine to non-members.

The delay which has this year arisen in the issue of the plates is much regretted by the Council—it is due to temporary causes and is not likely to recur.

Yours truly,

HORATIO R. FILLMER,

Hon. Sec.

52, SHIP STREET, BRIGHTON,
1st May, 1898.

To the Hon. Sec. of the Avicultural Society.

I am ..... in favour of the proposal to issue, next year, coloured plates to all members, and to raise the subscription to the Society to 7/6 per annum.*

Signed .....

* If not in favour of the proposal, please fill in "not."

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THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. IV.—No. 43. *All rights reserved.* MAY, 1898.

THE ROLLER AND ITS FOOD.

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

(Continued from page 107).

Let us now turn more particularly to the food of the Roller in captivity. As a rule, this unsightly creature, before it reaches our hands, has been fed chiefly or entirely on raw meat; and as the Roller is often slow to take to strange food, the raw meat should be withdrawn, or the supply lessened, gradually and watchfully; for it will go a long while without food if not pleased with what is supplied; but I do not believe in the wisdom of trying a bird with long fasts, as some bird-owners almost boast of doing. As far as possible, as suggested by Mr. Russell Humphrys, feed the Roller on insects, especially grass-hoppers, cockchafers and the Coleoptera generally, with a few worms—and baby frogs when obtainable; cockroaches, too, are valuable, but I do not care about gentles. I cannot obtain insects nor breed cockroaches, so have to fall back upon mealworms. Nevertheless, wherever you are, insects will fail sometimes, and the Roller cannot be fed solely on mealworms, so something else must be found. My experience with the Hoopoe, so unlike and yet so like to the Roller, has taught me that the first thing to be done with a Roller is to get it on to sop—milk-biscuit sop is what I actually provide. This supplies moisture; the bird takes to it readily, and seldom tires of it. With the ordinary insectivorous food I mix scraped meat (cooked and raw), and a little prepared yolk of egg. The yolk of a fresh egg I give occasionally as a treat, but this I do not mix up with the other food. Dry crumbled biscuit they always have, and it is usually taken pretty freely. They also have access to, and irregularly partake of, bits of grapes, dates, figs, and occasionally sultana raisins. Sometimes I notice them feeding complacently out of the seed saucers supplied for the Parrakeets, but do not know what the particular attraction may be.

Another interesting question remains to be considered—The Roller and its Drink. Is the Roller a total abstainer in its wild state? Does it drink or does it not drink, that is the question! Morris states—"They are said never to drink." My first Roller, who developed into an exceptionally natural specimen, and seldom had a chance of getting sop, was never *seen* to drink until it had been with me just short of twelve months; I was acquainted with the above-quoted statement of Morris, and was on the look out, and noted the date of the occurrence. When I received my present birds (a pair), not being able to supply them with insects, I took considerable pains to get them on to water; but it was slow work, for they had been put on to sop the moment they arrived. I did not see the female's introduction to the drinking water, but what seemed to be the first attempt of the male was ludicrous, although he was several months old; he didn't know how to drink; and the water ran out of the corners of his mouth, and flowed freely down his breast, as he took gulp after gulp. Even now these birds sit down before the water and drink in a most ceremonious manner, as if there were some mystery about the proceeding and they could not quite make it out. Nevertheless I suspect that caged Rollers, fed on raw meat and dry food only, with water close under their noses, would take to it pretty quickly.

I have not ever known a Roller knowingly touch water on the ground, nor ever attempt to wash anywhere; but they will spread out their wings and feathers during a gentle shower in warm weather. Some time ago, I chucked some mealworms on to the ground, and down swooped the Rollers, who as usual returned to their perches immediately, but continued scrutinising the ground for any that might have been overlooked. One had fallen into a washing-pan containing less than two inches of water, and down dropped my little hen again like a shot. For a few moments she stood in the water, her legs astraddle, astonishment and bewilderment depicted in every feather and feature. She flew up to her perch, and remained there for some time dejected and disgusted, the mealworm still lying in the water; but, greedy pig as she is, with an unbounded stomach for mealworms, I think she would have rather rotted on her perch than have gone for that mealworm again.

My theory is that the Roller, from necessity rather than choice, is certainly a partial, perhaps occasionally or often a total, abstainer from water. During the dry season in many hot countries frequented by the bird, except in inaccessible wells,

water is exceedingly scarce. All the watercourses are dry; and one may travel for miles without seeing a drop. And so the bird has got out of, or never developed, the habit of drinking, and obtains the moisture necessary for its body from fruits. My present lazy overfed Rollers are not fair samples, but my old bird ate grapes with avidity; Lord Lilford has shewn us that one specimen he examined (and the whole number he examined could have been but as a drop in the ocean) had some remains of figs in its stomach; and all but the more modern writers give berries as part of the food of the Roller.

Some one will say here:—If this be so with the Roller, how about other birds! Why should the Roller be the only abstainer? Not a writer hints at any other bird not drinking. True; I know not of so much as one; but I fear we must not attach too much importance to their silence. Some time ago, I chanced to meet one of our great cabinet-naturalists, and remarked on the non-drinking of the Hoopoe. To my surprise he immediately rejoined that the "desert-loving" birds did not drink. If this is a well-known fact, it is certainly remarkable that it should not ever, so far as I know, have been referred to in literature on birds. I sometimes think that the speaker made the remark in order to give me to understand that there was not anything under the sun, or anywhere else, which I could possibly know that he was not fully acquainted with. (*a*) On the other hand, I remember noticing a case in which, in answer to an anxious enquirer, a well-known writer told the owner of a sick Hoopoe to put certain medicine in its *drinking water*. *He* clearly did not know that the Hoopoe, as a rule, does not drink. I have had twelve Hoopoes in my time, some living for long periods, but only two out of the twelve were ever seen to drink. These two were not seen to drink until I had had them about eight months, when the one became very fond of water, the other drinking only rarely, I think. The Hoopoe, if I mistake not, is supposed to be wholely insectivorous; my birds were not so. In addition to milk sop, I have it recorded that they partook of rice pudding, stewed pear, and boiled cabbage; that they were very fond of tomatoes and stewed onion; that they had been seen eating young shoots of Virginia creeper; and that they were very fond of cherries (uncooked) and red currants. They also tried grapes,

---

(*a*) Mr. Phillipps does not, of course, overlook the fact that some of our best cabinet-naturalists are also not only excellent field-naturalists but even ardent aviculturists.—A. G. B.

True, and they also write; but not one has yet got so far as to say, with Morris, "They are said never to drink."—R. P.

but had difficulty in manipulating them. I still have a lively remembrance of their eagerness and excitement when cherries were tossed down, each bird seizing and rushing off with its prize; using the bill as a gouge, they scooped the flesh off the sides of the fruit as cleverly and neatly as if they had been at it all their lives. The habits of the Hoopoe, it will be seen, strongly support my theory about the Roller; and since the habits of, comparatively, such an easily watched bird as the Hoopoe are so little known to those who write about birds, it is hardly surprising that the latter should not be fully acquainted with the manners and customs of the shy, timid, and wary Roller. The whole matter teaches us the importance of supplementing our observations of birds in their wild state by studying their habits in captivity, keeping them under as natural conditions as circumstances will permit.

Most of the foregoing was written some time a[illegible] I may well add a few supplementary remarks. My two R[illegible]ers seem to have given up drinking! Is that because they find they do not need water or are better without it? or do they disapprove of cold water during the winter?

Since the experience of the female, already related, the male likewise, by an accident, found himself in a bathing dish, and in the dish he remained as if petrified. Unlike the female, he is not finger tame; yet he allowed me to take him out of the water, which covered his feet but little more; and he sat on my hand with a dazed expression in his face, as if he had been saved, by the skin of his teeth, from some terrible calamity. No wonder my two birds have given up drinking!!!

During the time I have had these two Rollers, small birds (Nonpareils, Grey Singing Finches, Bearded Tits, etc.) have often been left flying loose with them for weeks together, but never has either, by look or action, betrayed the slightest inclination to devour or injure them. Next to a fledgeling, I suppose there is nothing which will develop a latent rapacious instinct in a bird so readily as a small ground bird, yet Quails and Larks have wholly failed to get a rise out of my Rollers—there is nothing of the Jay about the Roller.

I notice in *The Zoologist* that, last autumn, a pair of adult birds of this species was shot near Battle in Sussex. The Editor makes the announcement as if the slaughterer had performed some meritorious act instead of one calling for the severest condemnation. In connection with the female it was stated, "Contents of gizzard, fragments of *Geotrupes*."

PHEASANTS.

By D. Seth-Smith.

The culture of the many species of Pheasants—some of the most magnificent of the feathered tribe—appears to be less popular with our members than other branches of aviculture. To those, however, who can afford the space for fairly large aviaries, the keeping and breeding of many of the most lovely species of the Pheasant tribe is a most delightful and fascinating hobby, and one well worthy of consideration in our Magazine.

It will, of course, be impossible to go fully into the subject of Pheasant keeping here, but I will try to give a few directions for the practical management in captivity of some of the most popular species of this tribe.

Before I speak of the kinds most likely to repay the care and attention of amateurs, it will be well to briefly consider the most suitable aviaries in which to keep them. These should be as large as possible and consist of two parts—an inner or covered part composed of woodwork and well lighted, and an outer part composed of wire netting on a wooden frame-work. An aviary, each part of which is about twelve feet square and proportionately high, will be suitable for one cock and his harem; but if the outer run be larger the birds will be all the better for the greater amount of exercise they will thus obtain.

In this part of the aviary it will be a good plan to have, fastened about one foot below the wire netting at the top, some strong string netting stretched tightly across, to prevent the birds from injuring themselves, if from a sudden fright they should dash upward.

The outer part of the aviary must be thickly planted with evergreen-shrubs to provide plenty of cover for the birds; for it must be remembered that Pheasants are particularly nervous birds and easily frightened, and if there should be no hiding-places they will, when suddenly alarmed, dash wildly about, damaging their plumage or perhaps breaking their necks.

The males of some species are exceedingly spiteful, and if there is insufficient cover for the hens the latter will occasionally be murdered by the cocks. This savage nature of some cock Pheasants in captivity is one of the greatest drawbacks to the culture of Pheasants in aviaries; it is more noticeable in some species than in others: one of the rarest and most beautiful of all the true Pheasants—Sœmmering's—was pronounced by the

late Superintendent of the Zoological Gardens to be the worst offender in this respect (*a*).

In the covered part of the aviary, stout perches should be fastened up for the birds to roost on ; and faggots of gorse or other thick brushwood should be placed against the walls to afford further protection for the hens.

All the species with which we shall have to deal are hardy and require no artificial warmth during the winter, provided that their aviary be well sheltered from the north and east winds.

The best food for the adult birds is barley, wheat, rice and maize ; but the latter must be given sparingly as it is very fattening. There are several prepared foods for Pheasants on the market : Chamberlain's is generally recommended, and Spratt's Crissel is very good. The adult Pheasants should be fed twice daily—early in the morning, and late in the afternoon just before they retire to roost. Pheasants, as a rule, do not hatch their own eggs successfully in captivity, so it is necessary to obtain reliable broody hens for the purpose. Most Pheasant-breeders recommend a cross between the Silky and Game Fowl as being the best variety to employ. Bantams are too small, being unable to properly cover the Pheasant chicks when the latter become any size.

The eggs must be collected as they are laid, and kept carefully in a cool place until a sufficient number have been obtained for a hen to cover comfortably. The number for one hen will of course depend upon the size of the latter ; but a small hen, such as the cross above recommended, will easily cover from fourteen to sixteen eggs of the size of Amherst's or Versicolors.

A habit to which Pheasants are liable in confinement is that of egg-eating ; the cocks are usually the worse offenders in this respect, and there appears to be no reliable cure. It is therefore very important that a sharp look out should be kept for eggs, for if left about they are liable to be broken, with the probable result that this habit will quickly become established.

Having selected a broody hen, she should be set in a coop without any bottom to it, there being merely a handful of straw

(*a*) In many cases, this is owing to there not being a sufficient number of females ; they are polygamous, and each male should have a suitable number of wives. In some aviaries, which are constructed for the purpose, with connecting compartments side by side, like the tigers' dens at the Zoological Gardens, the male is run into the next compartment after having visited each female, and the connecting-door shut for the rest of the day.—R. P.

or hay between the eggs and the ground. The coop should have a run attached in which the hen can feed and take exercise.

As soon as the chicks are fairly strong on their legs, they should be removed, with their foster-mother, on to fresh dry turf. They must be fed often, but only a little food must be given each time. It is very important to feed early in the morning. A favourite food with amateurs is hard-boiled egg chopped into very small pieces; this has, however, the disadvantage of being soon burnt up by the sun and thus becoming hard and indigestible.

Mr. W. B. Tegetmeier, the greatest living authority on Pheasants, recommends a custard "made by beating an egg with a tablespoonful of milk, and 'setting' the whole by a gentle heat, either in the oven or by the side of the fire." The same authority advises the use of canary seed in preference to meal for young birds.

Green food in the form of chopped lettuce and onion-tops must be supplied in addition to the custard and seed. As the chicks get strong, more seed and less custard should be given; and when five or six weeks old, their owner should begin to gradually accustom them to barley and wheat. Fresh ants' cocoons are the natural food for Pheasant chicks, but unless a constant supply of these be guaranteed, it is best not to commence feeding with them.

Having briefly touched upon the chief points in connection with the general management of Pheasants in aviaries, we have now to consider the kinds best adapted to a life of captivity in this country.

The genus *Phasianus*, which includes all the so-called true Pheasants, claims our attention first, as the most familiar and beautiful of our game-birds belongs to this group. Everyone is perfectly familiar with the common English Pheasant, but its origin is perhaps not so well known. Space will not permit of my going fully into the details of the introduction of the Chinese Ringed Pheasant *(Phasianus torquatus)* and of how it freely crossed with the original *P. colchicus*, which, before the introduction of the former bird, had reigned supreme in our coverts for centuries. Suffice it to say that the English Pheasant of to-day is not a true species, but a hybrid, or perhaps more correctly a mongrel, albeit a singularly beautiful one, the product of two varieties or sub-species.

All the true Pheasants, with the exception of the Bar-tailed, or Reeve's, appear to be capable of freely inter-breeding

with either of the parent forms, or *inter se*; so that the members of this genus are probably only entitled to sub-specific distinction. They are all of great beauty, and it can be easily understood that the hybrids produced by the inter-breeding of two well-defined races, such as the *P. colchicus* or *P. torquatus*, with the richly coloured Japanese *P. versicolor* (hereafter to be described) are some of the most beautiful of birds.

All the true Pheasants are well adapted to a life in captivity, and all appear to lay freely when once acclimatised and used to their surroundings. Great care must, however, be taken that they are not suddenly frightened by some unfamiliar object, for they take fright very easily, and on the appearance of anything strange, such as a dog or a broom, are apt to dash upward and injure their heads severely.

Common Pheasants' eggs can be readily hatched under hens, and the young reared without difficulty. I remember some years ago in our woods in Surrey, my dog, against all rules, made a dash at a sitting hen Pheasant, which so closely resembled its surroundings that I had not noticed it. Fortunately he was not quick enough to catch the bird, and a few tail feathers only remained in his mouth, the Pheasant going off uninjured. The dog was of course duly chastised, but that did not mend matters; several eggs were broken and there was little chance of the hen returning to the remainder of the clutch. I therefore placed the remaining eggs in my pockets and took them home to the keeper who placed them safely under a broody hen. How many eggs there were I cannot remember, but four only hatched, and one of the chicks died. The three survivors, a cock and two hens, were successfully reared, and a large aviary was prepared for them. In this they lived and throve; and each year several young were reared from their eggs, which were hatched by common hens. The cock was a very fine fellow, but had no white on his neck, shewing that his ancestors were chiefly of the *Colchican* variety.

The true *Phasianus colchicus* is much darker in colour than are most of our wild Pheasants of to-day; and, moreover, it entirely lacks the white ring on the neck, a feature characteristic of the more recently introduced *P. torquatus* of China. In almost any poulterer's shop may be seen, during the game season, Pheasants in various phases of plumage: some with the white patch on the neck very clearly defined, shewing their close relationship to *P. torquatus*; while the descendants of the original *P. colchicus* may be noticed with hardly any white on

the neck at all. Others again will sometimes be seen with exquisite shades of green and blue in their plumage, giving plain evidence of the introduction of the Japanese Pheasant *(Phasianus versicolor)*, another and exquisitely beautiful sub-species. This Pheasant is now often to be obtained from the dealers at a moderate price, and is certainly one of the most lovely of the tribe. It is a somewhat smaller bird than either *P. colchicus* or *P. torquatus*, and the young are said to be quite as easy to rear as either. The colours of the cock are chiefly metallic green and blue of different shades on the head and underparts, chestnut on the back, and greenish grey on the rump and wing coverts. The hen is much like those of the common species, but her markings are more clearly defined.

In his very useful "Hand-book to the Game Birds" Mr. Ogilvie-Grant writes,—"The Japanese Pheasant inter-breeds readily with the Chinese Ring-necked Pheasant, the male hybrid being a remarkably fine bird, surpassing in size and beauty either of its parents. This species also crosses freely with *P. colchicus*, the males being truly splendid birds, not unlike *P. elegans** in general colouring, but very much larger."

Versicolors are said to lay very freely in suitable aviaries, and are, like all the true Pheasants, polygamous, four or five hens being usually kept with the cock.

Another Pheasant hailing from Japan is Scœmmerring's *(P. scœmmerringii)*. The male may be described as of a rich fiery copper colour. The hen is coloured somewhat like him, but her tints are less brilliant. This is perhaps the most beautiful of the true Pheasants, but it is very rare in this country, and, unless a very large enclosure can be placed at its disposal, the cock will be almost certain to attempt the murder of his wives. This most unfortunate habit of some captive Pheasants is, however, by no means confined to Scœmmerrings: there is probably hardly a species certain individuals of which will not, at times, be troublesome in this way. The best and safest plan is, as before mentioned, to provide plenty of thick cover for the hens, and, if the cock should be inclined to be nasty towards them, to cut the quill feathers of one of his wings fairly close, in order to give the hens a better chance of getting out of his way.

The Prince of Wales' Pheasant (*P. principalis*) is another very beautiful bird, but at present quite unprocurable in England. It is found wild in North-Western Afghanistan,

* Stone's Pheasant.

and has been received alive by the Zoological Society. It is characterised by some conspicuous white feathers on the wings. In these days of rare importations one never knows what may turn up in the bird line; let us hope that ere long *P. principalis*, as well as numerous others, which are yet unknown to us in a living state, may be procurable in the English market.

The giant of the race, and one of the most attractive, is Reeve's, or the Bar-tailed Pheasant (*P. reevesii*), a species which does not inter-breed with its congeners so readily as do other true Pheasants; and the hybrids produced from Reeve's and any other Pheasants are said to be quite sterile. The Bar-tailed Pheasant is therefore in all probability, not merely specifically, but generically distinct from the true Pheasants, although still included in the genus *Phasianus* by most authors. A majestic bird this truly is, measuring some six feet or more in total length, and with plumage chiefly of a pure golden colour, each feather being edged with black, as in a perfectly marked "golden spangled" fowl. It is now comparatively easy to obtain these grand birds in this country, as they have been bred in aviaries by several amateurs; and on some estates, both in England and Scotland, have been introduced into the coverts. They seem to succeed best amongst the wild rocky scenery of Scotland, which must somewhat resemble the mountainous districts of China in which the species is found in a wild state.

(*To be continued*).

REVIEWS.

The "Feathered World" Spring Number.

Probably five-sixths of the members of the Avicultural Society are subscribers to the *Feathered World*, so that a review of the Spring number of that paper is really a work of supererogation—but for the benefit of the remaining sixth we wish to call attention to this excellent three-pennyworth. We can only mention the articles and illustrations which are of special interest to aviculturists, but doubtless the two coloured plates, and other "features," will be highly appreciated by the poultry and pigeon people.

There is an article by Dr. Butler on "Some imported Finches of the genus *Spermophila*," which treats of the White-throated Finch, the Bluish Finch, the Lined Finch, the Guttural Finch, and the Reddish Finch. This is accompanied by a really

excellent picture by Mr. Lydon, representing all five species (both sexes of the Guttural Finch being figured). It is no easy task to shew, in black and white, the distinctive characteristics of such closely allied species, but the artist has succeeded in shewing this, and we have seldom seen a more satisfactory and life-like drawing of birds.

There is a short illustrated article on the Arizona Quail, and one on "Larks and other British Birds in Captivity."

Mr. Camps' article, entitled "My Bird Room," is apparently a reprint, with some alterations and additions, of one from his pen which appeared in the *Avicultural Magazine* for December, 1894; a number which has, by the way, long been out of print. The article was well worth reproducing, and is made much more interesting by the illustrations which now accompany it.

"The Grey Java Sparrow," by Mr. W. T. Page, is substantially the same as an article which appeared quite recently in this Magazine.

Popular Parrakeets: their Breeding and Management by Amateurs, by W. T. Greene, M.A., M.D., F.Z.S., &c.

In this, his latest work, we find Dr. Greene at his best, and we can most heartily recommend this practical little book to our readers. The Introduction contains valuable hints on aviary building, the selection of nesting boxes, and other matters, and is followed by chapters on the Budgerigar, Cockatiel, Ring-necked Parrakeet, Rosella, New Zealand Parrakeet, Turquoisine, Blossom-headed Parrakeet, and King Parrakeet, while a few other species are treated of incidentally. "Popular Parrakeets" seems to have been written with great care, and is commendably free from the "padding" which often disfigures avicultural handbooks. Dr. Greene has wisely adopted the nomenclature of the Catalogue of Birds at the British Museum, and avoids those discussions on classification which are so out of place in a popular manual.

The statement that the King Parrakeet belongs to the sub-family of the Broad-tails must be a slip of the pen.

The illustrations are shocking.

There is a very complete index—a most useful addition to a book of this sort.

CORRESPONDENCE.

HEN PENNANT PARRAKEETS; WINTERING BIRDS OUT OF DOORS; CHANGE OF PLUMAGE IN WEAVERS.

SIR,—I think Mr. Farrar has a hen of a different kind, as I have seen a great number of Pennants in the nesting-season, and with their young families, in their native land, Victoria, but I never saw much difference between the sexes except in their manner and in the carriage of the head, the cock looking much prouder and more given to swagger—but he is, perhaps, a little more brilliant. On the other hand, I did see some birds similar to the hen described, in South Australia, very frequently in cages, but I do not remember noticing them wild. These are, however, well known to be a different variety, and have a name of their own which I forget.

In the wild state the Pennants and Rosellas hang about the homesteads together, and if allowed liberty will do the same in England, apparently not having any desire to fly to woodlands—at least, mine were so; but I had to cage them up again because they went down the chimneys several times.

Pennants are particularly "loose" in their colour, and soon go brownish if left in the sun. All Australian creatures seem to avoid the midday sun, and the Bush is quiet for a few hours in the middle of the day, even where there is shade.

Almost any bird (fowl, pigeon, or fancy cage-bird) must be kept out of the sun if its full brilliancy of colour is required, as any person who shows soon learns.

I should like to know if any of our members have kept Red-faced Love-birds in an outdoor aviary for several winters. I have kept them for an odd winter once, but I fancied the cold was too much for them. I only want to keep cocks. Is the Madagascar really much more hardy? I should also like to know if a Shâma would stand the winter in an open aviary in a cold part of Lancashire (*b*).

I am trying Red Lories (*Eos rubra*) in it; they have stood it well so far, but this is the most trying season, I always find. I suppose the birds get run down with the long cold weather, and the cold windy nights of March and April just seem to finish them off.

This year again one of my Rufous-necked Weavers went into dull winter plumage, while the other retained his full black and yellow suit. I have had them now two years, and they seem in perfect health and feather. Last year it was suggested that perhaps the one which went grey was a very young one or the other a very old one, but would that argument stand good again for this year?

A. A. THOM.

(*b*) I have now a pair of Red-faced Lovebirds, in perfect condition, which have spent a large part of the last three years in my very open aviary; but during the winter I insist on their going into the bird-room, at any rate at night. When really well established, they can stand a good deal of cold, but they do not like it, and it is not good for them; nevertheless, being constitutionally timid, they cannot be depended upon to seek shelter—the slightest thing will keep them out. I consider the Madagascar Lovebird to be a much hardier species. It is my opinion that a Shâma would not stand a winter in an open aviary, but I believe they have been kept out through the winter in well shut up quarters.—R. P.

FOOD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

SIR,—It may be true that none of the English Warblers live *absolutely* entirely on insects, but I believe that many of them, such as the Nightingale, Redstart, Wheatear, Whinchat, Stonechat, and Chiffchaff, eat very little else. On the other hand, it is certain that the Blackcap, Greater and Lesser Whitethroat, and Garden Warbler, are largely fruit-eaters. Mr. Meade-Waldo's instructive article on "The Food of the Blackcap," which appeared in the Magazine last year, proved that that species will live for years on fruit alone, and my own observations confirm this. But because a Blackcap will live on fruit it does not follow that a Nightingale would. The birds require quite different treatment.

Dr. Butler appears to argue that because a Nightingale, in its wild state, will eat a few berries (*a*) in the autumn for the sake of a change or because it can get nothing better, therefore it ought to have, in captivity, as its regular food, a mixture which consists largely of bread. It would be just as reasonable to contend that because a man can eat, without ill effects, a little pastry occasionally, he might, with impunity, eat pastry for breakfast, pastry for lunch, pastry for dinner, every day all the year round. If a man were to try this, the result would almost certainly be a bad attack of indigestion, especially if he took little exercise, and a similar result follows when a caged Nightingale is fed largely on bread. Moreover, there is a good deal of difference between bread and berries.

No doubt quite unintentionally, Dr. Butler somewhat misrepresents what I said: I certainly never admitted that biscuit is "almost (if not altogether) a suitable food for the more delicate insectivorous birds." Biscuit is no doubt better than bread, but really that is not saying much for it.

I cannot understand Dr. Butler's statement that Dr. Bradburn "was a strong advocate for the use of chopped beef for soft-billed birds." I believe that the reverse of this would be much nearer the truth, and can only conclude that Dr. Butler has never read "British Birds: their successful management in captivity." Nevertheless, there is a good deal more to be said for the occasional use of meat for soft-billed birds than Dr. Butler will admit.

I thought that Mr. Abrahams dealt almost entirely in foreign birds, and that there were a good many "living authorities" with more experience of British Warblers than he has.

SEPTIMUS PERKINS.

SIR,—Mr. Perkins writes as though my sole object in recommending bread for soft-billed birds was to prove him in the wrong: consequently he gives one the impression that he is hurt. I can assure him that my sole object is to arrive at the truth, and this (as I said before) can be best attained by practical experience.

(*a*) These frequent references to the Nightingale eating berries surprise me. I have not myself ever observed either the wild or the captive Nightingale devour any vegetable matter as *food*. The captive bird occasionally takes a little vegetable matter for medicinal purposes, just as the cat and the dog eat grass—but I have not ever known one touch a berry!—R. P.

(*a*) I must admit that I never heard of the Nightingale eating berries until Mr. Perkins made the statement; but I suppose he has proof of its being a fact.—A. G. B.

Nightingales warble but are not called "Warblers," and most assuredly the Chats are not: the Stonechat eats bread and thrives upon it, so does the Whinchat; the Redstart in my aviary would certainly die without it, for he gets but little of the egg and ants'-cocoons in his mixture, these being quickly appropriated by other birds; yet he is in excellent health and sings well: I have had him two years.

It was Mr. Perkins (and not I) who hinted that there was some affinity between bread and berries; I, on the other hand, said that I failed to see the point of his suggestion.

Dr. Bradburn, even in his Introduction, says:—"Beef and mutton (preferably the lean portions), *sheep's heart* and *liver*, in the right place will be found very useful, and in some instances indispensable." If Mr. Perkins will take the trouble to run through the suggestions for feeding insectivorous birds in Dr. Bradburn's little book, he will see that I have certainly not underrated the late doctor's high esteem for raw meat.

Lastly I would ask Mr. Perkins whether a foreign bird which voluntarily visits England is more subject to indigestion than a foreign bird which is imported into England; because, if not, his statement respecting Mr. Abrahams falls to the ground.

A. G. BUTLER.

THE FOREIGN BIRD EXHIBITORS' LEAGUE.

A new Society with the above title has been founded to encourage the exhibition of foreign birds and to improve shows in regard to them.

Thirty members have already joined, and a Council consisting of the following gentlemen has been elected:—Messrs. W. H. Betts, H. T. T. Camps, J. F. Dewar, J. Frostick, J. B. Housden, R. Humphrys, N. H. Jones, W. Osbaldeston, C. S. Simpson, J. Storey, and W. Swaysland. I have been elected Hon. Secretary and Treasurer.

The subscription is 2/6 per annum to members of the Avicultural Society, and 5/- to others. I shall be very pleased to receive the names of any desirous of joining. The rules have not yet been drawn up, but this will be done forthwith.

The objection has been made that the formation of a new Society was unnecessary, and that its objects could have been just as well effected by a special committee of the Avicultural Society. The answer to this is that the Avicultural Society is, as a Society, unable to interfere usefully in Show questions, as the great majority not only of the members but also of the officers, are non-exhibitors. For the same reason it would be unfair to use any part of the funds of the Society for any purpose connected with Shows.

It is the belief of its founders that the League supplies a long felt want. The U.K. Foreign Cage Bird Society, which was amalgamated with the Avicultural Society in 1895, was, to a large extent, a Society of exhibitors—since that Society ceased to have an independent existence exhibitors of foreign birds have been without a Society of their own.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

THE GOLDEN-CROWNED NEW-ZEALAND PARRAKEET.

SIR,—I have thought it might be of interest to the members of our Society to hear of an incident which has just occurred in my foreign bird-room.

In the larger aviary I have had for some time a pair of Golden-crowned New-Zealand Parrakeets (*Cyanorhamphus auriceps*); and they have neither interfered with each other nor with the other birds in the aviary.

Last week the hen was noticed to be slightly ailing, and she was caught out for treatment. The cock expressed such anxiety at losing his partner, who was herself palpably anxious to get back to him, that it was thought charitable to catch him also, and put him with the hen while she was being treated.

As long as anyone was in the bird-room the birds seemed perfectly content to be united, and everything went on satisfactorily for the first day. The next morning the hen was found dead in the cage, not from the trifling ailment for which she had been "caged up," but from having been killed by the cock bird. The top of her skull was torn completely off.

HENRY J. FULLJAMES.

GOULDIAN FINCHES.

Mr. Rotch having asked for information on the subject of the breeding of Gouldian Finches, the following reply has been sent to him by Mr. Phillipps :—

I fear you may have difficulty in obtaining a hen of either the Beautiful or of Gould's Grassfinch just at present, and, should you be successful, there would be little chance of the birds breeding until the end of the year. The hurried account I wrote for Dr. Butler (see "Foreign Finches") gave a fair representation of the birds as they were at that time, but those good days have passed away. They used to be brought over a few at a time and with great care, and they reached this country in capital condition. Now they are brought over in great numbers and crowded together; and they die off like flies, especially the females. Those that do survive are not of the slightest use for breeding until they have been kept, under favourable conditions, for a considerable time. Their breeding season is during our autumn and winter; and these modern birds, at any rate with me, do not shew any inclination to breed at any other time. When wishing to nest, the females become delicate if with, or within hearing of, the males, and must be kept warm or inflammation of the ovary may set in: warmth is the only preventive and cure. If you can get a good pair, they will nest almost anywhere; during cold weather, however, I think a wooden box is about the best place. Dry grasses, or even hay, is all that they require; neither species will use moss, wool, feathers, or anything of that nature.

It is said that these birds (*Poephila mirabilis* and *P. gouldiæ*) are bred largely in captivity in Australia for exportation. Possibly this may have something or much to do with the want of stamina in those specimens which now reach our shores.

THE PRICES OF FOREIGN BIRDS; THE SONGS OF FOREIGN BIRDS.

SIR,—I should be glad if some experienced aviculturist (in next month's Magazine, or the month after, now foreign birds are getting plentiful) would issue a list of the present market value of healthy specimens of the different species of foreign birds, stating their relative merits as songsters, whether *good*, *bad*, or *indifferent*. I have just been much disappointed with a Pekin Robin—I find his song is not nearly as good as that of our English Robin, although it is described by one of the dealers as equal to that of the Blackcap or ordinary Nightingale; and the Virginian Nightingale, so-called, has nothing of a song, and yet the dealers describe him as a *beautiful* whistler.

I have gained much valuable information from the *Aviculturi Magazine*, and I hope to gain a great deal more.

[illegible]. JONES.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Jones :—

It is quite impossible to comply with your request. The prices birds vary from day to day, and are governed, like the prices of other commodities, by the laws of supply and demand. By watching the dealers' advertisements a fair idea of the current price of the commoner species can be formed—there is no regular price for the rarer birds. The Shâma and the Pekin Robin are generally considered to be about the best songsters among the insectivorous foreign birds, and the Grey-singing Finch and the Alario Finch the best among the foreign seed-eaters. But the respective merits of songsters is largely a matter of opinion, and individuals of the same species differ greatly. I should say that the *average* Pekin Robin is a better songster than the average English Robin, though not so good as the Nightingale or Blackcap, but this is only my personal opinion (*a*). I have never heard a Virginian Cardinal which could be called a fine songster—the song of that bird appears to me monotonous and tiresome—still, I should give it a fairly high place among foreign birds, as most of them are still worse performers.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

(*a*) I have had a good many pairs of this species: as a rule the males sing magnificently (quite as well as any Blackcap); but occasionally a poor songster comes to hand. One which I parted with last year sang only seven notes, which may be thus expressed *tur-te-rur-tur; tur-tur-tur.*—A. G. B.

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

MEMBERS' SALE AND EXCHANGE COLUMN.

The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 7 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable. Each advertisement should be written on a separate sheet of paper, with the name and address of the advertiser at the foot.*

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Miss HUSBAND, Clifton View, York.

Pair White-eared Conures, 25/-; pair Pileated Finches, 15/-; pair White-throated Finches, 10/-; pair *Sycalis arvensis* 10/-; pair Sydney Waxbills, 30/-; pair Cherry Finches, 20/-; male Totta Finch, 10/-; male Blue Bullfinch, 15/-; male Diamond Dove, 10/-; male Grenadier Bishop, 15/-; male *Fgaurini* Finch, 10/-; female Indigo Bunting, 10/-; female Dwarf Finch, 5/-; female Yellow-backed Whydah, 10/-; female White-throated Finch, 4/-; female French Partridge, 5/-.
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BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicultural Magazine* is sent free to members monthly. Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them.

The Magazine is published by Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Limited, of 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., and is dispatched by them monthly to the members. Orders for extra copies, back numbers, and bound volumes should be addressed to them and not to the Secretary.

As has been previously announced, it is intended to issue, this year, a series of four hand-coloured plates, similar in style to those which appeared last year. The first plate of the series appeared in December. Members who wish for these *coloured* plates will be asked to pay an extra subscription of 5/-, and, as an additional privilege, will have all their Magazines dispatched by letter-post, and protected by a sheet of strawboard.

A coloured plate of the Golden-shouldered Parrakeet, from a drawing by Mr. Smit, will appear in July. One of the White-eared Grassfinch, by the same artist, in August; and one of the Common Zosterops, by Mr. Frohawk, in September or October. The drawings of all these plates have been made, and the two former are already in the hands of the colourists.

The following can be obtained from Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Ltd., at the prices named, which include postage:

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(Continued on page 3 of cover).

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THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. IV.—No. 44. *All rights reserved.* JUNE, 1898.

BREEDING INSECTIVOROUS BIRDS.

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

In responding to Mr. St Quintin's invitation to say a few words about the breeding of the Shâma, I may commence by remarking that I have always a certain number of large, often rapacious, birds—formerly I had a great many—and that, as my space is very limited, breeding with me has been almost an impossibility, and rarely attempted except when the birds insisted upon tempting their fate. Moreover, my outdoor aviary, although provided with plenty of shelters, is simply a little walled-in garden (an ordinary cats' playground) covered over with wire netting to a height of over nine feet, so that the inmates and their nests are much exposed to the weather; for most birds in a natural garden-aviary *will* roost and build in the shrubs, and rarely will take to artificial nesting-places or structures (see, for instance, "How the Birds learn." Vol. III. p. 174). Again, strange as it may seem, I could hardly obtain such a creature as a mealworm, and the few I did obtain only at fancy prices. And I was commonly absent from home from morning till night, the birds being left pretty much to take care of themselves, so that my experiences in this particular direction have been incomplete.

Some of the Mynahs used to nest very freely; the most energetic and persevering were a male *Acridotheres cristatellus* and a female *A. tristis*; many eggs were laid, and mostly stolen by the male, but a few young were hatched and partially reared. Artificial food only was supplied, with which the parents were dissatisfied; mealworms and cockroaches would have saved the young. But the nest of all others I look back upon with sorrow and regret contained four as strong young White Jackdaws as ever were hatched. The male, who stole the first egg as soon as laid, had been removed, and the female would not feed the young on artificial food. I can still hear her voice as I opened a window

looking on to the aviary before starting to the city; she asked me for food for her babes in a pathetic and reproachful tone; but I gave her nothing to her liking and the young died of starvation.

I am satisfied that the White Jackdaw is not an albino, nor an artificial production like the White Java Sparrow, but a distinct variety or race which breeds true to colour coming from the Continent; but I have not been able to ascertain the locality whence those annually imported actually come. Of course mealworms, cockroaches, etc., would have saved these birds, and the plumage would have settled the question. Several times with birds I have had an opportunity which I have failed to avail myself of, and the opportunity has never been offered again—a warning to my fellow-aviculturists. In succeeding years the female Jackdaw would never allow the male to approach her (one year she mated with a Chough, but the eggs were not fertile); and I have had other instances where brother and sister obtained a divorce:—was this accident, or a natural instinct to avoid inbreeding and a degenerate progeny?

The female Shâma is now a common bird in this country, but years ago it was as fabulous as the Roc, and many were the mysterious reasons given for its non-appearance. I may mention, in connection with the food question now being discussed in our pages, that my first female died in a fit owing to the special food I used to have prepared for my birds not having been sufficiently cooked. I have long since ceased to give a servant an opportunity of killing my birds by negligence. My next female I imported direct from Calcutta. A pair of Shâmas were sent over, but the male disappeared shortly before the steamer entered the Thames. According to the official report, it was killed by the rats. I examined the cage, and found that the rats could not possibly have got hold of it. A sovereign was to have been paid to the butcher, the caretaker of all birds and beasts on board ship, for each bird received alive; but somebody had evidently offered more than the sovereign, and so the butcher let the "rats" have it. I mention this as there seems to be strong evidence that this is not an uncommon occurrence when rare birds are imported unaccompanied by a responsible person. However, the despised female, of course the one I valued most, arrived safely on September 29th, 1892. On April 26th following, this bird, who was shut up separately from a male, but in the same bird-room, commenced carrying hay about. On May 5th it was clear that the birds wanted to pair, when, on the following

morning, a sad calamity occurred. The male chanced to fly on to the front of his house when the old Chinese Blue Pie, a very spiteful bird, who still survives, darted down and tore off the centre toe of the left foot. Later in the month, the birds were introduced to the garden, and, on the 19th, both were set free. The male's delight was unbounded; and right bravely did he disport himself before the lady of his love, but his bad foot rather quickly cooled his ardour. As evening drew on, he went to roost in a balsam poplar close to the side of the aviary, the female not being far off. In the night I was awakened by one of the most painful sounds I know, the cry as of a bird in the talons of a hawk. With more speed than clothes, I rushed out. A cat had climbed up the outside of the aviary, and the male, after the unfortunate manner of birds in real or fancied peril, had flown on to the wire netting. Years previously, however, I had learned by bitter experience that a single wire is practically useless as a protection against cats. The wires were double, and some three inches apart, one being of one-half inch mesh. As an additional safeguard, the aviary was and is surrounded by a cat's-claw protection; and up to this point the cat had climbed, but higher it could not go. So the Shâma, although within a foot of the cat, was safe; the horrid eager look of the beast I can picture to myself now, as it strained itself against the wire between me and the sky; and the poor bird was paralysed with terror. I carried both of the Shâmas back to the house, placing them in the male's old home which would be familiar to his eye,—but he lay on the ground all night in an almost helpless condition. When are our legislators going to mete out justice in the matter of cats! Why should there be one law for the cat-owner and another for the aviculturist? What justice or reason is there in allowing people to let their cats loose to trespass in other persons' gardens and feed on their pets? They should be required to keep their cats within their own domains or to take the consequences.

As soon as the birds had recovered from the shock, once more they were placed in the garden, and, more wise than before, they roosted in safe places and were disturbed no more. Several times the female commenced to build; but the cold weather seemed to cause much pain in the male's foot, or perhaps he had not recovered from the cat scare; anyway he was not responsive, and the nesting was again and again discontinued. The place selected was on a shelf nearly four feet from the ground, running along under a shed. It transpired afterwards that two nests were built, about two feet apart, in different partitions of the

same shelf. In building, the plucky little woman, who seemed fully to understand that her mate was bad—a state of affairs which seldom fails to bring out the best qualities in the sex—carried at first only dead leaves, chiefly ivy and euonymus, the other available dead leaves being those of the rhododendrons, which she would not touch; she also took up straw and hay, finally lining the second nest with the finest hay; moss, hair, etc., she would not look at. The foundations of the nests were very large; Robins' and Redstarts' nests are often built on the same plan. In some respects, perhaps, it was more like to the nest of the Nightingale than to that of any other British bird. While all this was going on, the male looked on approvingly, sang occasionally, and from time to time made miserable the lives of an Australian Black-breasted Peewit, another very old friend, still enjoys the best of health, and a common Lapwing, [illegible] other occupants of the aviary, who eventually had to be [illegible]. Judging from appearances, for I kept away from the nest, [illegible] first egg was laid on 6th June, 1893, and the female commenced to sit on the 9th, on four eggs as transpired later.

On June 20th I noticed the female fly across the aviary from her nest with something in her bill; the male immediately darted at her and seized the "something," and a tug-of-war ensued. This "something" turned out to be the first-born; the excited mother had by an accident carried out the nestling along with the shell, and it was forthwith torn to pieces between the two birds and, if I recollect rightly, devoured by them. Twice again that day and once on the following morning did the female fly across the aviary to the same spot bearing the discarded shells. For the first few days the young were fed by the female, later by the male also. Not only did the parents refuse to carry artificial food of any kind to the young, but, as is too often the case, they themselves wholly gave up eating artificial food; and this circumstance adds greatly to the difficulty of rearing a brood of insectivorous birds. It is impossible for me to obtain insects here in London, and the young Shâmas were reared on cockroaches, mealworms, and gentles. I tried to breed "jumpers" in cheese, but they were not appreciated. The gentles I discontinued after a time, as they seemed to be more heating than the mealworms. At first small cockroaches were taken to the nest from preference, but later the mealworms were preferred. Unfortunately I could obtain but a very limited supply of cockroaches, and had to rely mainly on mealworms. The gentles and mealworms I placed in bran, in large open saucers over a foot in diameter.

The three surviving young left the nest on 2nd July, well feathered but unable to fly. The noise the two old birds made that day was astounding, the female mad to entice the young away from the adjoining aviary and its rapacious occupants (a Hunting Cissa being especially desirous of "assisting" the mother), while the male, on the highest perch, whistled defiance at the world. The more he whistled, the more the neighbours crowded into the gardens around (it happened to be Sunday); and the more they came the more the bird whistled and sang.

In feeding the young, excepting quite at first, the parents would not be bothered with carrying *small* creatures to their nest; these they swallowed, and carried only the larger ones. If I persisted in supplying only small mealworms or cockroaches, they would not budge until they had collected several of these in their bills. The enormous cockroaches which I saw that female Shâma give to her young after they had left their nest would have convinced me, if I had had need of convincing, of the needlessness of cutting up mealworms to give to young birds. The mouth of the young bird while being fed was like the vortex of a whirlpool. The female would endeavour to tilt a big cockroach head foremost into the open mouth: if successful, it was caught in the vortex and disappeared in a twinkling; but if the insect happened to get crossways or was not caught fairly in the vortex, it flew off at a tangent, and the performance had to be gone through again.

I supplied the mealworms, etc., alive and uninjured, leaving it to the parents to kill them, which they did not always do by any means.

One reads that the parent Eagle shoves its young out of the eyrie on the sides of the precipice, and then darts under the falling bird for the purpose of supporting it in the air. This is sometimes regarded as a pretty story and nothing more. Story or no story as regards the Eagle, I can say that, as regards the Shâma, on the day the young left the nest, I saw the female several times, when trying to get them on to perches in a shrub, fly under them and give them a partial back-up.

Until the young left the nest, the parents kept up the delusion that I did not know anything about it. They never went straight to the nest, but every morsel of food was carried round the best part of three sides of the aviary, almost precisely by the same route, a pause usually being made at two points, and again just below the nest. When the male, who usually performed the office, carried off the excreta, he flew zig-zag

hither and thither all over the place, dropping them at the farthest possible point.

I need now only add that more delightful pets than these young Shâmas could not be, flying after me everywhere, and perching on me anywhere they could find a footing.

PHEASANTS.

By D. Seth-Smith.

(Continued from page 130).

In aviaries, Reeve's Pheasants become very tame and familiar with those who habitually feed them. The hens lay freely, and the eggs can be hatched under domestic hens, and the young reared quite as easily as those of any of the other Pheasants. Considering that a full grown cock of this species carries a tail some five feet in length, the aviary in which these birds are kept cannot very well be too large.

The genus *Calophasis* possesses but two species, Elliot's (*C. ellioti*) and Hume's (*C. humiæ*); the latter is unknown in Europe in a living state, but the former has, within the last few years, been imported in some numbers, and has been bred by amateurs, as well as at the "Zoo." Elliot's Pheasant is indigenous to the province of Che-kiang, where it was discovered by Consul Swinhoe, and was first brought to Europe in 1879 by Mr. Jamrach. In shape and manners this bird closely resembles the true Pheasants, but it differs greatly in the form of its markings. In the male, the mantle, wings and breast are of a rich bronze-red; a band of purplish steel and two bands of pure white cross the wings; the underparts being chiefly pure white, and the throat black.

The genus *Chrysolophus* contains but two species, both of which are of exceptional beauty and deservedly popular with Pheasant keepers. The Golden Pheasant (*C. pictus*) is almost as well known as the Common Pheasant, having been bred in captivity in Europe from a very remote period. Its general appearance is too familiar to need a detailed description here, the rich red, gold and green of its plumage making it the most gorgeous of all the known Pheasants. My experience of this species is that the males are often exceedingly spiteful towards the females, but this, alas, is a failing which most Pheasants sometimes possess in captivity. Lady Amherst's Pheasant (*C. amherstiæ*) is

now fairly well known and easily obtainable in the English market, having been bred by numerous amateurs. It is slightly larger than its congener and very different in colouring, the crest being deep red, the mantle and breast metallic green, and the underparts chiefly pure white. The tippet on the nape is composed of feathers of pure white margined with black. This very lovely Pheasant is indigenous to the mountainous districts of Western China. In suitable aviaries Amhersts thrive well and the young are said to present no especial difficulty in the matter of rearing, but they do not attain their full plumage until nearly two years of age, differing in this respect from the true Pheasants. The two species of this genus interbreed very freely in captivity, and the resulting hybrids, which are said to be perfectly fertile, are remarkably handsome birds, combining the rich colourings of both species.

The Silver and Swinhoe's Pheasants belong to the rather large family of Kalij Pheasants,—the genus *Gennæus*. *G. nycthemerus*, the common Silver Pheasant, has been known for a very long time as an aviary bird. Its colours may be roughly described as white, finely pencilled with black, above, including the tail, and black on the underparts. This is a very hardy species, and breeds very freely in captivity. It is found wild in the south of China, but is said to be becoming very rare there. *G. swinhoii* is a handsome species, the male having a white crest and mantle, the centre pair of tail feathers being of the same colour. The rest of the body is bluish black relieved by crimson on the scapulars. It is not a common bird in the English market, and is found in a wild state on the forest-clad mountains of Formosa.

The foregoing notes have already occupied too much space, and I must stop. I would, however, just mention the Moonal Pheasant of the Himalayas (*Lophophorus refulgens*), whose gorgeous plumage no artist can truthfully depict; the Peacock Pheasant (*Polyplectron chinquis*), the Firebacks, and the Tragopans. All are well worthy the attention of our members, and let me express the hope that before long we may hear of the successful rearing, by members of the Avicultural Society, of some of the rare and lovely species of the *Phasianidæ*.

A VISIT TO "BROOKLYN."

By the Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton.

I was enabled the other day, through the kindness of Mr. Fulljames, to see his Parrot-room, and, as his collection is a singularly interesting one, I thought a few words about it might be welcome to the readers of the *Avicultural Magazine*.

One thing that rather astonished me, in making my appointment with Mr. Fulljames, was to learn that he was only at home after 6 p.m. except on Sundays. I knew he bought largely, but since he could hardly see much of his birds, I was at a loss to understand what attraction they could have for him. He met me at Balham station, and as we walked up to his [illegible] I asked him plainly *what* his interest in the birds was. He told me quite simply that his object was excellence as a collector. His interest was exhibiting. As a former exhibitor of dogs myself, and as one who occasionally shows dogs now, I understood, and could sympathize at once. But it is necessary to say this that my readers may understand what I could *not* get from Mr. Fulljames himself. I could not get much account of the ways and habits of his Parrots. He devotes himself to their health and condition, not to the study of their characters. For that one must go to the lady who keeps house for Mr. Fulljames—"for," said he, "it would not be possible for me to keep the birds I do, unless my housekeeper took a great interest in them."

He ought to have a gold medal for being such a plucky buyer. Were there a few more able and willing to do as he does, what rare birds might we not see imported!

But before I went to the living birds, I was shown a case containing some two hundred stuffed Humming Birds. Cases of Humming Birds, my readers may say, are not very uncommon. Perhaps not, but have they ever seen a nest of *young* Humming Birds? I must confess that I never have. Yet here were two: one with the young just ready to fly; the other with young three or four days old. These latter were rather parchmenty, owing to the drying up of the tender skin, but one felt that one knew something appreciably more about Humming Birds after seeing them.

I was then taken to the room containing the British birds, but as my object was the Parrots we did not stop there long, but went upstairs to the Parrot-room. It is not a very large room, but it would be very difficult to find a collection of rarer Parrots

in the same space. The room is scrupulously clean, and has plenty of light. The cages are sensible, and I had but one criticism to make—I thought it too hot. There was a stove burning, and no window open. Of course an open window could not be expected at 6.30 p.m., but I do not think a stove was desirable on the third of May. If I had one, I should have Tobin's system of ventilation going on. Parrots do not require great heat; and the only time they suffer from cold is when they are moulting in September and on the very severe days of winter. Then I think they like artificial warmth. Parrots, however, are different in their powers of enduring heat.

The first bird I looked at was the Hyacinthine Macaw. He evidently did not mind the heat, for he was in the pink of bloom—I do not think I have ever seen a Macaw with such a sheen on his plumage. This was the bird which Mr. Fulljames said, in a previous number, was *not* good-tempered. I hardly agree. The bird is devoted to Mrs. S. (as I will call the lady who looks after them), and I think his devotion to her is the cause of his warning off other people. I think he would always be good to his feeder. However, one has to be careful of such a tremendous beak. He had twisted about the wires of his cage in all directions. The next bird to him was the Shining Parrakeet, claimed by Mr. Fulljames at the last Palace Show. This bird is quite thrown away where he is—he is full of antics, and evidently wanted a great deal of play and petting. He ought to be with some one whose "only joy" he should be. After him came a Meyer's. This bird was in admirable condition, but not as tame as those deposited at the Zoological Gardens some three or four years back—*they* were charming—pocket companions, I might call them, but this one was as much where he ought to be, as the Shining Parrakeet was where he ought not to be—nothing was wasted in keeping him for exhibition purposes only. Then there were two Antipodes Island Parrakeets, (*Cyanorhamphus unicolor*). I thought the Zoo. alone had a specimen of this very rare Parrot, but found, to my surprise, Mr. Fulljames with two. Alas, both cocks! Had they not been, I think I must have asked Mr. Fulljames to let me try and breed some for him. Next to them were a pair of Blue Bonnets. Then a Lineolated Parrakeet. This, my host thought, might come near to my ideal pet. It is pretty, if not gorgeous, and quiet; but I should doubt its capacity for talking. Considering that they have been brought over in some numbers at different times, I rather wonder we have not heard more about them as cage-birds. I have never had any myself, because my space is limited, and there

have always been other birds I have wanted more—but they would be an agreeable change from Budgerigars, if they would breed as readily. The one bird at "Brooklyn," which I do not feel sure I have ever seen before, was the Blood-stained Cockatoo. This must be Bechstein's Cockatoo (*C. philippinarum*) (*a*) of which he says the cry is very disagreeable. But Mr. Fulljames says it is quiet. It is quite the smallest Cockatoo I have seen. Not far from it stood *Pionus chalcopterus*—the Bronze-winged Parrot. He is a very tame little bird; but the *Pioni*, as a rule, are tame, yet they can occasionally give a nip, as this one also does. And they take their dislikes, too. A hen *Menstruus* I had was very good with me, but hated one of our under-keepers, and would always bite him if he could. Mr. Fulljames had also a hen *Menstruus*, but it did not seem specially tame.

In the window stood several Australian Parrakeets, but amongst the Australians there was nothing, with the exception of one, which was either a Variegated Rosella or a hybrid, to call for special note. A Forsten's Lorikeet, a Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, a Crimson-wing, a Rock Peplar, a King, and a cock Barraband were amongst the number. In mentioning the birds on the opposite side of the room, I forgot to say that there was a hen Malabar, which was the only representative of the genus *Palæornis* in the collection. There were no Conures; Mr. Fulljames, I was interested to find, quite sharing my feelings about them. I was disappointed at missing the *Microglossus*—which had been sent to the Alexandra Palace to try and forget feather picking in a large aviary. The Gangas had been sold at the Crystal Palace Show. Even Mrs. S. had not a good word to say for them. Her experience was what mine has been, that they were morose creatures, and not very willing to make friends. I may be going to change my opinion—but of that more another day.

I have left, for the last two notes, the gems of the collection, and the most interesting bird in it.

The gems were a pair of Princess of Wales Parrakeets (*Polytelis alexandræ*). I had seen the bird before at the Zoological Gardens, but never in such plumage as these. Not only were the colours of these—the yellow-green of the wings and the delicate rose of the throat—most vivid, but their tails were of a length I have never seen in any species of the family. I have never seen even a Barraband, or a Rock Peplar, with such tails. And then, they were delightfully tame, coming up to the bars of the cage to be noticed, and piping with a loud clear pipe

(*a*). The *Cacatua hæmaturopygia* of the Cat. Birds Brit. Mus.—R. P.

to draw attention when we turned away—as pets, it, perhaps, was their one drawback. That pipe might have got upon one's nerves. They were said to have been taken from the nest, and brought over as pets, by the man who sold them to Mr. Jamrach, from whom Mr. Fulljames bought them. They did the importer the greatest credit.

I have some reason to hope that their owner is going to devote a large aviary in another room to these lovely birds, to induce them to breed. It was, at the time of my visit, inhabited by a Cinnamon Blackbird and "Jacob," the talking Starling (not that he favoured me with any conversation), both of whom might very well make way for the Parrakeets. It would be a great feather in anyone's cap to have a nest of young *Alexandræ*.

Lastly, the most interesting bird was the Spix Macaw. The most interesting, because it is clearly a baby, and now, owing to Mr. Fulljames' kindness, I can tell my readers what they will not find, as far as I know, in any book—that the young bird has every feather on the back edged with black, entirely unlike the even grey-blue of the adult. It was very tame and gentle, but not, as regards plumage, in the best of condition. I never can see a bird in rough plumage, without longing to get it right. And so it was arranged between Mr. Fulljames and myself that I should have the Spix at Bibury, and try what a little outdoor life might do for it. Had our plan come off, I might have had more to say hereafter about the Spix Macaw as a pet. But I had reckoned without Mrs. S. When she was told of the plan, she showed so much reluctance to the Spix going out of her keeping that I withdrew my proposal. It is not fair to those who have the trouble of our birds to disregard their feelings about their charges.

With this ends the account of my very pleasant visit. I write it in the hope that it may not be altogether uninteresting to my readers, but that the bare account should be as interesting to them as the visit was to me is not to be expected.

P.S.—I should perhaps say that, though I think the heat of the Parrot-room was too much for Australian Parrots, it is not the heat I so much object to as the want of oxygen. My *Nymphicus cornutus*, which is out of doors and comes from a hot climate, has exactly the sheen of Mr. Fulljames' Hyacinthine Macaw.

THE DHYAL BIRD.

(*Copsychus saularis*).

Notes by the Rev. HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

In India this Dhyal Bird is found in every part of the Empire, and is a resident of Ceylon and Southern China. When a lady saw the male bird that I once kept in a cage for a few years, she immediately recognised it as a species of bird that as a child she had often seen hopping about in the gardens of Penang. (I *think* Penang was the place named by her).

Those that are brought over in captivity invariably seem to be extremely tame, and many are bold enough to attack one's fingers when placed to the bars of the cage. Dhyal birds are, I believe, favourite cage-pets amongst the Chinese gentry, who, as they do with other birds, carry them about with them in small cane cages in order to enjoy their company and their song. As to the latter, the Dhyal bird, although related very closely to the Indian Shâma, cannot sing so melodiously; for its notes, in my opinion, are harsher and wanting in variety; still, he is a good songster and a gay one.

Mr. Lydekker describes the adult male as follows:—"Head, neck, breast, and upper-parts glossy black, the wings and tail are black, varied with white; and the abdomen and under tail-coverts white. The female has the upper-parts of an uniform dark brown glossed with bluish; the throat and breast dark grey; and the wings and tail dark brown varied with white." The male Dhyal bird might well be roughly described as a miniature Magpie. In size he is rather larger than a Shâma, although the tail is not nearly so long.

A very delightful cage-bird, bold and happy in disposition, and seemingly not difficult to keep in health, eating any good mixture of food for insectivorous birds, with the usual addition of mealworms, raw beef, and fruit, etc.

My bird would perch on my hand, pecking most pugnaciously at my fingers, puffing out his feathers and singing *sotto voce*.

Probably a pair of Dhyal birds would nest in an outdoor aviary, where they might have a chance of catching insects, which could be attracted within the wire by a piece of meat hung up. Gentles could be supplied by such means, and *might* serve for the constant demand made by insectivorous birds when they have young in the nest.

It is too aggravating to lose broods of Shâmas, etc., for want of proper food.

Dhyal birds build in holes of trees, or crevices of walls, and consequently a tempting nesting-place could be easily given in an aviary.

There is another species in the Philippine Islands (*Copsychus mindanensis*), and yet another inhabiting Madagascar (*C. albospecularis*) (*a*) whose song is said to be very superior.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FOOD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

SIR,—I am sorry that Dr. Butler thinks that I am hurt: I should be very unreasonable if I were to allow myself to feel hurt by the remarks of such a courteous antagonist. I fully recognise that his "sole object is to arrive at the truth," and I am sure he will admit that mine is the same.

I did not think that anyone would question the fact of the Nightingale eating berries. If I simply give my own personal experience I shall perhaps be suspected of faulty observation or defective memory, so I will refer my critics to Howard Saunders' Manual of British Birds, 2nd. Ed., page 140, where they will find it stated that "the adults live on worms, insects, ants'-eggs, fruit and berries, especially those of the elder." (*b*)

I used the term "English Warbler," in a rough popular sense, for all the small insectivorous British species for which there seems to be no comprehensive name. I really think that the Nightingale and the Chats may, in that sense, be called Warblers with no more impropriety than Waxbills and Weavers are called Foreign Finches. Indeed, in "Foreign Finches in Captivity," Dr. Butler goes so far as to include the Tanagers under the term "Finch." If a Tanager may be called a Finch, surely a Nightingale may be called a Warbler. And the ornithologists are not agreed among themselves, for Professor Newton includes the *Ruticillinæ* in the *Sylviidæ*. The whole point, however, has nothing to do with the present discussion.

I am sorry that I feel bound to repeat that, in my opinion, Dr. Butler absolutely misrepresents the drift of Dr. Bradburn's teaching on the subject of raw meat for birds. In the quotation he gives, observe the words "in the right place." A careful perusal of "British Birds: their successful management in captivity" will show that by "the right place" the author did not mean daily or regular use. This, however, is a plain question of fact, upon which everyone can satisfy himself, and if this dispute introduces some readers of the *Avicultural Magazine* to Dr. Bradburn's book it will not have been wholly useless.

(*a*). The *Gervaisia albospecularis* of the Brit. Mus. Catalogue. In this Catalogue another species is given, *Copsychus seychellarum*, from the Seychelles.—R.P.

(*b*). It may be questioned whether Howard Saunders speaks from experience: I have tried my present male with banana but it will not even touch it.—A. G. B.

Mr. Swaysland informs us that he has known the Nightingale (both wild and caged) to eat elder berries, and also black currants. Many birds, undoubtedly frugivorous, will refuse banana, although greedily fond of some other fruits.—ED.

If Dr. Butler supposes that I make an arbitrary and unscientific distinction between British and foreign birds, and assume that they need different treatment, he is mistaken. But he knows, even better than I do, that ninety-nine out of every hundred of the smaller foreign soft-billed birds imported into this country are totally different feeders from the Nightingale. The Nightingale, Redstart, Wheatear, and Whinchat are almost exclusively insectivorous, but with the exception of the Red-sided Tit and the Blue-throated Warbler (both very uncommon) I cannot at this moment recall any small foreign soft-billed birds that I have ever seen in captivity in England of which the same can be said: they are, on the contrary, nearly all fruit-eaters, and, therefore, much easier to cater for.

SEPTIMUS PERKINS.

SIR,—Mr. Septimus Perkins' quotation does not interest me. Can he state that he has himself actually seen a wild Nightingale take fruit or berries? The Nightingale was a rare bird (only one sure nesting-place each year within two miles of the house) in the county in which I passed twenty years, the greater part of my country life, and I cannot say, and did not say, that the wild bird does *not* take either or both, but am, at present, strongly of opinion that it does not.

As regards the captive Nightingale, for many years past I have kept it pretty regularly (I have two now), wild-caught birds and hand-reared, English and German, in the house and in the garden, in cages and flying loose, but I have never seen one touch either fruit or berry, although most of them have had constant opportunities.

Just like the Shâma, I have found the Nightingale with me to be wholly insectivorous, but occasionally taking a portion of a fading, not a dry, leaf, or a whole euonymus leaf, for medicinal purposes.

But Nightingales under different conditions may act differently; and I can readily understand that a specimen kept in a cage on the monotonous food, so often recommended, of ants'-cocoons with a few mealworms, might be glad to swallow anything for the sake of a change. Nevertheless, this would not necessarily indicate the true nature of the bird; and I shall be glad to hear of Mr. Perkins' *personal* experiences of the wild Nightingale in this connection—but no more quotations, *please*.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

SIR,—As there has been so much correspondence in the Magazine *re* food and treatment of Nightingales, I have written to a gentleman at Torquay who I knew had a Nightingale which has been in his possession a long time, asking him to give particulars of his feeding and treatment, and I enclose his reply, which I think may be of interest to many of our members, if you care to publish it in the Magazine.

C. P. ARTHUR.

The following is a copy of the letter referred to above.

FAIRHOLME, TORQUAY,

27th April, 1898.

Mr. ARTHUR,

DEAR SIR,—My Nightingale keeps in splendid condition, thanks to

your food (a); I have used it a long time, and it is decidedly the best I have had.

Everyone is surprised when I tell them I had him on the 6th Sept., —nearly eight years ago—and his song is more powerful now than ever.

My course of feeding is, in the morning about two teaspoonsful of food mixed with a little bread-crumb and scraped carrot or swede- —carrot for preference—and four mealworms; then at midday, a little ef, scraped; a few spiders if he seems a little seedy; a rusty nail in ter, and a little saffron when in the moult.

He enjoys a bath now and then, and when he does not bathe I always that his feet are kept clean.

Yours very truly,

W. DONALDSON.

MAGPIES.

SIR,—I should be much obliged to any member of the Council who would give me some information about keeping and feeding Magpies in captivity.

Would it be better to have only one, or a pair?

I have a shed with weather-proof roof and wire front, which I think d be a comfortable home for a bird of this kind, or for a pair if they d be happier. I was obliged to give up keeping small birds in it, as ice, and sometimes rats, persisted in visiting them, and although, ge to say, they did no harm to the birds, I was afraid they might do so.

Would it be necessary to have anything done to keep out rats and mice supposing I had Magpies? There is no floor to the shed, it is only gravelled.

E. E. WEST.

The following reply was sent to Miss West.

You do not give the size of your shed, but if it is fairly large—say 10 or 12 feet square—a pair of Magpies ought to get on well enough, if properly attended to. If it is much smaller, however, it would be best to keep one bird only, as two might fight. If you keep two together, it would be best to have a true pair, as they might disagree if both of the same sex.

With regard to food, Magpies are practically omnivorous: meat, grain, vegetables, and fruit being readily eaten; while their partiality to eggs and young birds has caused the death of countless numbers at the hands of game preservers. In captivity, therefore, they are very easily catered for; all scraps from the table should be collected and given to them, and soaked dog-biscuit will be found useful. Magpies are very fond of ing, and a plentiful supply of clean water should be provided for the se in a shallow trough. When reared from the nest they make tful pets and are most tame and amusing, and I don't see why a pair ly housed should not nest in captivity.

Rats should certainly be kept away, and I should strongly advise you ive a thin floor of concrete—say 3 inches—put down, if you are

---

. Mr. Arthur's Food appears to be very similar to that made by Mr. Abrahams. ich foods contain a good deal of preserved egg, and some ants' eggs—fastidious rs like Nightingales pick out the egg and ants' eggs and leave nearly all the rest—at t, that is my experience.—H. R. F.

troubled with these destructive rodents; but mice would not so much matter, and, if they should show themselves in the day time, would probably form part of the Magpies' food.

Some game-keepers make quite a harvest by the sale of you Magpies, and you will probably have no difficulty in obtaining a cou next month. If you can have a choice out of a nest of young bird should advise you to pick out the largest and the smallest, providin latter is a healthy bird. You would then be most likely to h true pair. Of course it would not do to keep any small birds with the

D. SETH-SMITH

THE "IDEAL" PARROT.

SIR,—I have read with interest the description given by the Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton of the ideal pet Parrot, because I think I may claim to have been the possessor of a bird which had all the characteristics that Mr. Dutton considers essential, size only excepted.

He was an Alexandrine, and as tame as it is possible for a bird to be. He never refused to go to any human being at first sight, and indeed wa never really happy unless sitting on someone's shoulder or wrist. He gr preferred men to women, and to some men in particular he showed the demonstrative affection, positively refusing to come away from them, sometimes flying back when he had been removed from them. He w allow me to do anything with him, even to putting him in a basin washing him; and he habitually sat on my lap or on my foot, close to the fire and beside the cat, which animal was devoted to him. He never made any unpleasant noises, and during nearly three years was never heard to scream, and never bit anyone. I gave him the name of "Tony," and he soon knew his name, although for years he had been called "Polly."

As an instance of his intelligence, I may relate that, one evening after everyone had gone to bed, I heard "Tony" giving the little cry which he usually made when he wanted attention. As he had never done this before, I went downstairs to the room where he was, and found that the electric light had been left on; I turned it out, and heard no more of "Tony."

The friend who gave him to me had him four years, and for most of that time he was a great talker, but suddenly left off, and while I had him he never talked except in hot weather, and when alone out of doors. During the last year of his life, I trained him to such cleanly habits that I could safely trust him on anyone without fear of accident, and, indeed, none ever occurred. "Tony" was the envy and admiration of all m friends, and his early death is unceasingly regretted by his mistress, would not have exchanged him for all the Parrots she has ever see ever will see.

C. L. COLLIE

(Continued from page 2 of cover).

MEMBERS' SALE AND EXCHANGE COLUMN.

Charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 7 days before the end of the month, and MUST, in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable. Each advertisement should be written on a separate sheet of paper, with the name and address of the advertiser at the foot.

Large number of British and Foreign birds for disposal from out-door aviary, in fine condition and thoroughly acclimatised. Particulars forwarded on application.
Mrs. JACKSON, Danecourt, Parkstone, Dorset.

Pied cock Bullfinch, head white, tinted carmine, 15/-; yellow canary-coloured cock Greenfinch, 30/-, or exchange for smaller pied birds.
G. C. SWAILES, Beverley.

Ornamented Lorikeets. Both imported over two years. Absolutely perfect in every respect, and an undoubted pair. What offers, in cash would exchange? H. R. FILLMER, Brendon, Harrington Road, Brighton.

Would Hill Parrakeet, full colour, whistles "There's nae luck aboat thae the house," &c., price 30/-. J. B. KING, Glebe, Kilmarnock, N.B.

Pair Australian Crested Doves in perfect health and plumage, 20/-.
Miss M. SHARP, Ringwood, Hants.

Cock Indian Grey-winged Blackbird (*Merula bulbul*), acclimatised, full song, rare, 40/-; Cheap. C. HARRISON, Woodhayne, Honiton, Devon.

Cock Blackbird, cage-moulted, in song, with cage, 5/-.
C. HARRISON, Woodhayne, Honiton, Devon.

Blackcap, cock, hand-reared, 2 years, good plumage, tame, sings; £1 with show cage. Mrs. HOPWOOD, Eastlea, Oxford Road, Worthing.

Male *Cassidix oryzivora*, in aviary, from Upper Amozonia this spring; Long-tailed Grassfinch (*Poephila acuticauda*), 20/-; pair Redrumps, in aviary, 50/-
R. PHILLIPPS, 26, Cromwell Grove, West Kensington Park.

Cock Alexandrine, in good plumage, very healthy, acclimatised, 30/-.
Miss C. L. COLLIER, 210, Adelaide Road, S. Hampstead.

Finest stock in London. Acclimatised prize winners. New Zealand parson bird, 50/-; short billed toucan, 50/-; Indian shâma cock, 50/-; hen, 70/-; bath Austrian blue thrush, v. h. c. Palace, 35/-; American blue jay, 25/-; purp dian mynah 20/-; red-eared bulbul, 15/-; hen blue robin, 10/-; Virginia deligh nightingale, 12/6; scarlet tanager, second Palace, with show cage, 50/-; suita herb tanager, 20/-. JOHN FROSTICK, Balham.

to l atised prize winners. pairs: red-headed paradise sparrows, 40/-; ite breasted finches. 35/-; double banded finches, 30/-; white Javas, 6; diamond sparrows, 12/6; saffron finches, 7/6; zebra finches, 5/6; riated finches, Bengalese, 4/6; collection of Senegal birds, 12/6 doz. ngle: Oryx bishop, 15/-; orange bishop (full colour), 10/6; red headed All bishop, 7/6; Madagascar bishop, 4/6; hen Pytelia melba, 40/-; Diuca feede nch. 10/6; white throated finch, 7/6; Hartz Mountain canaries, cocks, lea 7/6, 10/6, 15/-, hens, 2/6; Russian bullfinch, h. c. Palace; Russian gold-finch, c. Palace, 10/6. Mealworms, 8/6 quart.
JOHN FROSTICK, Balham.

(Continued on page 4 of cover).

SALE OR EXCHANGE—*(Continued from page 3 of cover).*

Acclimatised prize winners. New Zealand sheep eating parrot, v.h.c. Palace, novelty, £5; musky lorikeets, second Palace, £5 pair; scaly breasted lorikeets, v.h.c. Palace, £5 pair; bloodwing parrakeets, 40/- pair; king parrakeet, first North Metropolitan, 35/-; Leadbeater cockatoo, 35/-; lineolated parrot, v.h.c. Palace, 20/-; red-faced love birds, full winged, 20/- pair; peach-faced love birds, 20/- pair; budgerigars, 8/6 pair. JOHN FROSTICK, British and Foreign Bird Specialist, 143, Endlesham Road, Balham.

Aviculturist's Library (second-hand books). "Cassell's Book Cage Birds," 20/-; Greene's "Parrots in Captivity," 20/-; Amateur's Aviary," 15/6; Gedney's "Foreign Cage Birds," 2 vols., 15/-; "Wallace's British Birds," 7/6; Dyson's "Bird Keeping," 3/6; Bechstein's "Natural History Cage Birds," 3/6; Adam's "Favourite Song Birds, 2/6; Adam's "Humming Birds," 2/6; Harting's "Our Summer Migrants," 2/6; White's "Natural History of Seborne," 2/-; Browne's "Practical Taxidermy," 5/-; Jardine's Natural History: "Humming Birds," 2 vols.; "Game Birds," 1 vol.; "Pigeons," 1 vol.; "Flycatchers," 1 vol., the lot, 10/6. Warne's "Royal Natural History," twenty-four 1/- parts for 12/-; all in good condition. JOHN FROSTICK, Balham.

WANTS.

(These are charged for at the same rate as birds for sale).

Hawfinch, cock, British, large bird, fit to win in strong competition.
J. B. KING, Glebe, Kilmarnock, N.B.

Hen Vinaceous or Senegal Dove.
Miss M. SHARP, Ringwood, Hants.

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THE GOLDEN-SHOULDERED PARRAKEET.

(Psephotus chrysopterygius). $\frac{7}{12}$ nat. size.

om Living Specimens in the London Zoological Gardens.

THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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THE GOLDEN-SHOULDERED PARRAKEET.

(Psephotus chrysopterygius).

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

"We come now to a group of Australian Parrakeets which are, in my opinion, the most beautiful and most desirable of all, namely, the Psephotus Parrakeets. Of this genus there are but five (*a*) species known to exist, and four (*b*) of these are occasionally kept in this country. The remaining species (*P. chrysopterygius*) is very rare, and but little seems to be known of it even in its native land."

So read our esteemed fellow aviculturist Dr. Simpson, at the Inns of Court Hotel, on 19th May, 1894, before the members of the late Cage Bird Club, the same being an extract from his excellent paper on "Parrots and Parrakeets" as it appears in the Transactions; and so much and no more is the sum total of what he had to say on the subject of this article; and yet it is of this species, of which so little is known even in its native land, and concerning which Dr. Simpson intimates so much by saying so little, that our hard-hearted editor calls upon me to write an account. Alas, and alack! 'tis but little that I know of *Psephotus chrysopterygius*.

Some time in the spring of 1897, a few specimens of what were at first supposed to be Paradise Parrakeets reached this country from the continent. I am probably correct when I say that six were brought over in the first instance, of which two went to the Zoological Gardens, two to one of our members who exhibited them at the Palace last February, and the remaining two to the most humble of your servants. Two more arrived towards the end of June, but I do not know whither they went.

(*a*) A sixth species *P. xanthorrhous*, is described in the Brit. Mus. Catalogue.—R. P.

(*b*) The Blue Bonnet (*P. hæmatorrhous*), the Beautiful or Paradise (*P. pulcherrimus*), the Many-coloured (*P. multicolor*), and the Redrump (*P. hæmatonotus*).—R. P.

Out of the eight, I believe only one turned out to be a male; this bird and his mate are at the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park, and it was from them that our illustration has been taken. When first received, the male was in immature plumage, like to that of the adult female; but the authorities at the Gardens quickly detected that the birds were not *Psephotus pulcherrimus*; and, as soon as the male had donned his adult attire, it was announced that they were *Psephotus chrysopterygius*. I suppose that never before had living specimens of this species been seen in this country.

For a time I tried to persuade myself that my two were likewise a pair; and I kept them under observation in a large aviary-cage in my dining-room; but there is not any sense in living in a fool's paradise. True, indeed, that one had a darker crown than the other, and that a well-known Parrot-lover (not, indeed, a member of our Society) pointed out with authority which was the male and which was the female, and what were the points of difference. I could only smile a sickly smile, for even an authority cannot change the sex of a bird. Something may be said for deceiving another, but not much for deceiving oneself; and I knew in my heart that they were both females.

Although lacking the magnificence of the male, the female possesses a sweet delicate beauty of her own; some of the tints are exceedingly soft and attractive, and the figure is exceptionally slim and graceful. In many of its notes and ways, the Golden-shoulder is like the Many-coloured Parrakeet, and is as easily kept in health on the simplest fare, canary seed and spray millet being its principle food. But the female, at any rate in the absence of a male of her own species, is much more timid and nervous. It is an active, lively bird, and its flight is very rapid. When eventually loosed into the bird-room with garden aviary attached, my two females did not get on very well, for their timid wild nature hindered them from seeking the shelter of the bird-room during cold weather, and often from obtaining a sufficiency of food. This, however, was distinctly the fault of the aviary and its inhospitable inhabitants. With peaceable companions, this species would succeed much better in a warm aviary than in the best of cages. Although not exactly delicate, it is small wonder that it keenly feels the cold when we consider that it comes from so torrid a region as North Australia.

Like the Blue Bonnet and the Many-coloured, only in a much greater degree, the Golden-shoulder has an instinctive desire, as a general rule, to hang on to the wires of its cage or

ary during the night, and as high up as it can get; and, owing their insistence in passing the nights hanging on to the wire ection over my bird-room window (they were always shut in ight, and often during the day when cold), one of my birds winter took a chill and died. In all three species the idea to be of roosting just under some projection, for the se of concealment, just as if they were in the habit, in their state, of roosting clinging to the trunk of a tree, pressing t likely into some convenient crevice, just below some thick ecting bough or other over-hanging protection. Except in case of the sitting female, I think they never roost in holes, or one might suppose that, like the Carolina Conure, they sleep hanging on to the insides of large hollow trunks, or possibly in spouts of the gum trees. When not roosting as mentioned above, they prefer some thin natural branch or bush, fixed up at the highest possible point. Probably the same instinct prevails in the Paradise Parrakeet, but it is practically latent in the less nervous Redrump, the most free breeder in captivity of the genus.

This spring, I have shut up my surviving female with a young male Redrump, but nothing has come of it. The Golden-shoulder has mostly received his advances with maidenly fear and trepidation, which is all very pretty and proper but distinctly aggravating. Probably, also, her feelings towards him are not unmixed with scorn, not so much on account of his youth, for he will get the better of that, but on account of his comparatively plain dress, coarse figure, and plebeian name. Is she not, indeed, a Golden-shouldered Parrakeet and he but a vulgar Redrump! Nevertheless, for all that, twice recently have I caught her on the sly making gracious advances, which have been received with becoming humility, so there is room for hope that, another year, if we should all be alive and well, something of the nature of a nest may come to pass after all.

This species is smaller and of more slender build than the Many-coloured Parrakeet; and the chief points in the plumage that catch the eye may be indicated as follows:—

Adult male. A light-yellow band across the forehead, each end dispersing among and washing the feathers around the eyes; a large triangular patch of deep black covers the crown, the base resting on the yellow frontal band, while the apex is extended down the centre of the back of the head and merges in the light greyish brown of the nape, upper back, and neighbouring regions; lower back and upper tail-coverts light blue, inclining

to green towards the tail; two central tail feathers dark ol
green, dark blue, and tipped with black; a large golden-yell
patch on each wing; sides of face, neck, breast, bright l
down to abdomen which, with thighs, is whitish barred
deep red; some of the blue on sides of face and neck t
with brilliant green; eyes dark; bill light with bluish or gr
tinge; flights dark with bluish or bluish white (or yellow)
length slightly over nine inches.

Adult female. Crown brownish; frontal band and w
around the eyes, yellowish white. In my living specimen
bill and throat are nearly white, and the cheeks and sides of f
white with a faint blue wash, so that as she holds herself erect
after the manner of her species the face generally seems
exceedingly fair, and sets off the brown cap to perfection; the
rest of her front down to the abdomen is washed more decidedly
with blue, and the abdomen and thighs are barred with faint red,
the under tail-coverts being tinged with the same colour, while
the general appearance of the under side of the closed tail is
light blue tipped with black, the latter being caused by the two
central feathers, mostly black underneath, projecting beyond the
others; and there is also a black bar across the base of the tail
underneath, differing in shape and width with the movements of
the bird, according to the amount exposed or hidden by the
coverts. The upper parts of the bird are yellow-green, the
yellow predominating here and there, especially on the wings,
but the yellow wing-patch is not so bright as in the male, nor
so well defined. The deep blue-black edge of the wing, the black
tail-tip, and the beautiful blue lower-back and upper tail-coverts(*c*),
shew up grandly against the general light body-colour of the
bird. Feet and legs, pale whity-brown. It is impossible not to
notice a marked difference in the shades of the plumage of the
female at the Zoological Gardens, the skin of my dead bird, and
my living specimen, my little female being a perfect queen
compared with the others. The delicate tints and wash-
colourings are manifestly very fleeting. A few days ago, not
deeming the colours used by our artist to be sufficiently bright,
I paid a visit to the Parrot House, and was grievously dis-
appointed to find how the birds there had deteriorated since I
saw them last summer. The male was dull and generally shabby,
and the female seemed to have entirely lost the blue tints about
the front, and was a regular dowdy. A small cage is not the
place for such active birds. When are the members of the

(*c*) The colour of this region seems to vary greatly, even in the same individual, at one time the blue predominating, at another the green.—R. P.

logical Society going to wake up to the fact that their Parrot use is an objectionable place and unworthy of its occupants! sidering how great and growing an interest is now taken by many in Parrots, foreign Finches (of which they have so rable a collection—presumably owing to want of space), ther species now immured in the Parrot House, it seems sighted that they should be wasting their land and money ier buildings (one looks like another feeding bar—as if were not too much of that sort of thing already) while so y valuable birds are being ruined from want of proper mmodation.

THE NIGHTINGALE IN LANCASHIRE.

By W. Landless.

No doubt the above heading will appear somewhat strange to most people *(a)*, but to me it is one of the greatest pleasures I have to hear my Nightingale singing his full wild song every day, the whole day long.

My first experience of these birds was about sixteen years ago, when I heard one singing for the first time in its wild state; and I was so struck with the delightful music that I determined to possess one for myself, with the result that I have kept a 'gale, and sometimes two, every year since—of course taking fresh birds every year and liberating in the spring each bird that does not turn out a songster.

I have tried hand-reared birds; and have also taken the young, and captured the parent birds which have fed and reared them; and I have caught branchers in the autumn; and all have turned out failures, never producing any more music than you will hear from the young swallows when they are perched on the eaves. But being no way disheartened by this non-success, I determined to persevere, and am rewarded with now hearing, in the midst of a Lancashire manufacturing town in the months of March and April, the Nightingale singing his pure wild notes as well as ever he was heard in the Surrey or Kentish dales in the middle of May.

No doubt the above statement will sound rather doubtful to most people who have tried to keep these charming birds; but when I say that I have experimented with the Nightingale for sixteen years, and have made that species a special study—being

(a) The Nightingale is not found in its wild state in Lancashire—possibly some of our south-county readers may not be aware of this fact.—Ed.

determined to possess, if possible, a perfect songster,—I sho
be a fairly good judge.

With regard to the treatment which is the secret of succ
First we will take the cage, which is a very important facto
the comfort of the bird. This should be of the box pa
wired only in the front; and great care should be taken
that there are no sharp projections such as nails, or any
in the bottom, or any loose rough wires in the front, a
Nightingale is a very restless bird when in health, and
tinually jumping about; and the chances are that, in the co
of his daily exercise, he would come across some of th
imperfections, and very likely break his leg. I mention this a
I have lost birds in this way myself; and if there is any faulty
place in the cage they will find it. The top of the cage should
be covered with baize to prevent any damage to the bird's head
if he should fly upwards, as caged Nightingales often do,
particularly during the breeding season. The perches, I find,
are much better of plain wood, say about ¾in. diameter, and
not covered with any material, such as baize or wash-leather.
The cage bottom should be well covered with sharp grit, say
about ½in. thick, and cleaned out at least twice a week.
Since I have adopted the plain perches and plenty of grit at
the bottom of the cage I have not been troubled in the least
with the birds' feet, and their claws have kept their natural
length, being of course worn down by the grit.

The cage dimensions should be at least 2ft. by 18in. by
15in., and the food should be placed in porcelain hoppers. The
bird should be kept in a cool room having no artificial heat
whatever, as I find the Nightingale can stand a great amount of
cold, and should have a bath every day; of course during the
winter you must add a little warm water just to take the chill
off—your finger will be a sufficient thermometer, but I should
say the temperature should be about fifty degrees in the winter.
After the bird has bathed draw out the bottom, scrape away the
wet sand, and cover with fresh grit.

The staple food should be yolk of hard-boiled new laid
egg mixed with ants' eggs of the best quality, and only
mix
enough to last the bird one day (this you will soon find out by
experience), and do not on any account give it stale food—
particular attention should be paid to this in summer time as it
is then more liable to turn sour. I make the yolk of one egg last
two days for two birds—that is, each bird gets one quarter of the
egg each day; the remaining portion of the egg should be placed

a cool place till required. You add to each daily allowance of g one spoonful of best ants' eggs, which should be well worked mongst the egg food, to put, as it were, a coating of yolk on outside of each ; if this be not done the bird will simply toss nts' eggs away ; and I find, even under the most favourable tions, they eat very few ants' eggs, but I continue to give my daily allowance—one spoonful each per day.

In addition to the above diet they require a good supply of worms. I give the birds at least thirty per day each, which t in two before giving them. I never make a practice of ing the birds take mealworms from my fingers, as it is an natural process, and birds must be starved to do so, and once brought so low they never regain stamina again, but sit on the perches and mope, waiting for some one to give them another worm. Of course the above does not refer to hand-reared specimens. If any one were to offer my birds a mealworm from his fingers they would simply ignore it, and yet they will sit and sing their wild full song while I am feeding them, of course during the singing season.

About the middle of May the captive Nightingale gets somewhat off-colour, and remains so till he gets well through the moult, which generally commences about the first week in July; then is the time to give them a good supply of spiders and insects, such as earwigs, flies, etc.—nothing comes wrong in the insect line.

From the middle of June to the end of August fresh ants' eggs are very plentiful. I generally run out in the country on my bike at least once a week, and take a small tin and spoon, and collect a few, which help them over the moult wonderfully, and by the middle of August they have their new plumage, and rare and well they look, and by their action in the cage they appear to feel very proud of it.

ON AN UNCOMMON TANAGER IN CAPTIVITY.

By Percy W. Farmborough, F.Z.S.

Some two years before we were married, my wife received, as a present from a friend in South America, several birds, and among the number were three Tanagers. Of these two died about a month after their arrival in this country, but the remaining one soon adapted itself to a change of residence, and, in fact, survived until two or three weeks ago. During the three years that it lived in England it was one of the most engaging

pets I know—stay a moment, though, as I married after only six months' courtship, I must restrict my responsibility for th statement to a period of eighteen months, and let my wife h the responsibility of the previous eighteen.

The bird in question may be described as follows:—To head, cheeks and upper part of back, a rich chestnut; back, a greenish yellow, some of the feathers being faintly t with chestnut; the tail, and the primaries and secondaries o wing, blue; the primary and secondary coverts, a pinkish fa the lesser and median coverts, the same as the lower back o brighter; the chin, throat and breast, a brilliant green vergi into a greenish blue on the abdomen, the ventral feathers being chestnut; the lores, jet-black; the beak and feet, slate.

As may be imagined, the bird was a very beautiful one and attracted a great deal of attention from visitors, and until eighteen months ago its identity was a mystery; but, after looking up various ornithological works, I at length recognised it as the Chestnut-backed Tanager *(Calliste preliosa)*.

The bird was kept in a drawing-room in a box-cage, which stood on a table in the ordinary recess to be found at the side of a fireplace. The corner in which it was placed was well lighted. The Tanager was tame—tame enough to take food from the fingers of those with whom it was familiar, and steady when surrounded by strangers. When I use the word "steady," I do not mean to infer that the bird was stationary, but that it was not restless, fluttering about the cage and dashing itself violently against the wires. The size of the cage was about three feet six inches long, by about two feet high, by twenty inches broad. It will thus be seen that there was sufficient room for exercise. There were four perches, one placed three inches from the floor and three inches from the front of the cage, this one extended from one side to the other, a second connected this perch from its centre to the back of the cage, and the remaining two were in the ordinary position of perches. The food and water were placed in white glazed earthenware vessels, so that everything was perfectly sweet and clean. The floor was strewn plentifully (nearly half-an-inch in depth) with coarse sand.

The bird was fed on small insects, mealworms, spiders, and small garden caterpillars, as well as on such fruits as were in season, black currants being particularly relished. It ate banana, but shewed no particular liking for it, and whilst other fruit was to be had would leave it till the last. When insects and fruit ran short the deficiency in food was made up by

mixture, in equal parts, of ants' eggs soaked in hot water for a few moments, and fresh hard-boiled yolk of eggs.

The Tanager in question often whistled softly, but exhibited no extraordinary vocal powers, its chief attraction lying in the beauty of its plumage. It would take food from the tips of our fingers, but only in a very gingerly fashion; first hopping down to the lower perch, standing there for a few moments twisting its head from side to side as if trying to ascertain whether there was a trap laid or not.

The other Tanagers, which survived their arrival in England only a matter of three or four weeks, were described as being thickly spotted with blackish markings on a green ground. This description would shew them to be either *Calliste punctata*, or *C. guttata*, or *C. xanthogastra*, but of this there can be no certainty as I never saw the birds.

THE NEW ZEALAND PARRAKEET.

(*Cyanorhamphus novæ-zealandiæ*).

By A. Savage.

These Parrakeets are great favourites of mine, although, from want of room, I do not possess any at the present moment. They are, as far as my experience goes, quite harmless birds, and can be lodged, without fear, in an aviary of mixed Finches or Budgerigars, and this opinion is confirmed by others who have kept them on this side of the Channel (*e*). Their plumage is in harmony with their disposition—quiet—the prevailing colour being dark green; the forehead and cheeks are red, and a small patch of red is found on each side of the rump; the flight feathers are blue. The beak is dark, with a large whitish spot on the upper mandible; eyes ruby. The legs are long, enabling the birds to run quickly, and they spend a good deal of their time on the ground, turning over, with their feet, the sand on the floor of the aviary in search of tit-bits, fowl fashion. The male and female are practically alike in plumage, but the female is smaller than the male—her head and beak are considerably so, and there, I think, is the best mark of distinction between the sexes. The voice is peculiar, and resembles a bleat more than anything else—hence the German appellation "Ziegensittich," or Goat Parrakeet. I believe the importation of the New Zealand Parrakeet to be rare, both in England and on the

(*e*) The writer resides in France.—Ed.

Continent; but aviary-bred birds are frequently obtainable on this side of the Channel; such birds are quite hardy, and a good pair will breed freely without fuss or trouble. They are adult at six months, and young hatched in January have been known to breed the same year; birds hatched during the spring and summer months breed, as a rule, the next year. I believe New Zealand were the first Parrakeets, larger than Budgerigars, I ever bred. The eggs are white, as is usually the case with Parrakeets, and there are generally from four to six to the clutch. I have never had less than two or more than four young reared per nest, but more fortunate amateurs can boast of a nest of six on more than one occasion. There are three, four, or even five nests during the year, when a good pair commence breeding early in January; but three nests have always satisfied me.

Food is a very simple matter:—Canary seed, white millet, and oats, mixed with a sprinkling of hemp (about a couple of dozen seeds) on the top, and spray millet, is all the seed I gave, whether they had young or not. Green food is, of course, necessary—chickweed in seed, and groundsel in flower, I consider the best—and they must have plenty of it when they have young to feed. As soon as the young are hatched, the parents become quite bold when the green food is taken into the aviary; one cock bird I had would almost come on to my hand for it, he was in too big a hurry to wait, with the cares of his family of four on his shoulders, until it was tied up in its place. They are excellent feeders, and I never lost a young one from want of care on the part of the parents or insufficient feeding. They remain in the nest about a month, and can dash about pretty well when they leave it. This Parrakeet can be strongly recommended to any amateur wishing to "try his hand" with a species a nick above Budgerigars. I do not think they have been mentioned in the Magazine before, but we had an interesting article, by Mr. Bouskill, on breeding *C. auriceps*, a kindred species.

ON CERTAIN IMPERFECTLY KNOWN POINTS IN THE HABITS AND ECONOMY OF BIRDS.

By F. Finn, B.A., F.Z.S.

Deputy Superintendent of the Indian Museum.

Although the habits of birds, more especially those connected with nidification and the care of the young, have been long and carefully studied, much remains to be done in the observation of living birds, even when these belong to quite common and well-known species. This consideration serves me for an excuse for introducing a few notes which I have been led to make on certain points, in the economy of birds, which appear to me to have been insufficiently studied, and to have, possibly, some bearing on the difficult problem of avian classification. Students of other groups of animals—I may instance Bats and Butterflies—avail themselves of peculiarities of attitude, etc., in their subjects for taxonomical purposes, and with regard to Birds I see no reason why such peculiarities as those to which I draw attention below should not be taken into consideration by systematic ornithologists, equally with nidificatory, distributional, and dietetic variations.

On the position of the feet in flight among "Picarian" Birds and Parrots.

I will first notice a point which has lately attracted considerable attention among ornithologists—the positions of the feet in certain groups of birds when the members of these are on the wing. It may be taken, I think, as fairly settled that Waders and Waterfowl, Game-birds, Pigeons, and Birds-of-Prey, carry their feet behind when in full flight, irrespective of the length of those members. But with regard to the mostly short-legged *Picariæ* and the Parrots I am not aware that any observations have been made, and I have therefore taken particular notice of these birds with the following results:—

To take the Parrots first. I long watched the common Indian Parrakeets (chiefly *Palæornis torquatus*) when at large, in order to discover where their legs were placed when the birds were on the wing; but owing to the swiftness of their flight, and the fact that the feet are ordinarily concealed beneath the feathers of a flying bird, I was unsuccessful, till one day a *Palæornis torquatus* got into the Bird Gallery of the Museum, and flying to and fro overhead, gave me an excellent opportunity of observing that its feet were carried behind. As the gallery is a very large one, and the bird took long flights, I have no doubt but that this

is the normal position for the species, and very probably for Parrots in general.

Among the so-called "*Picariæ*," using the term in its widest sense, I have noted the carriage of the feet in flying Hoopoes, Kingfishers, Rollers, Hornbills, Barbets, Woodpeckers and Cuckoos, and will now take each of these groups in detail as to this point. In Hoopoes I have been unable to get a sight of the feet of a bird flying at large, but by buying specimens of *Upupa epops* in the Calcutta Bazaar, and letting them out in my quarters, I found that the feet are constantly kept drawn up to the body, as the bird flies—never extended behind, at least in a room. In Hornbills on the other hand in spite of the supposed alliance of these birds to the *Upupidæ*, the feet appear to be extended behind in flight. I saw this very distinctly at any rate in two specimens of the common black-and-white *Anthracoceros*; the bird in each case was a tame one, but flying out of doors. With regard to Rollers, I have suspected, from watching birds at liberty, that the common *Coracias indica* carries its feet behind; but I could not be certain till I let out a tame bird I had in my bedroom, and found that though the feet were at first allowed to hang like a crow's when starting, they were undoubtedly stretched out behind the bird when well under way.

Of Kingfishers I have observed more than one species. A *Ceryle rudis* I brought up from the nest, and allowed to fly about at liberty for this very observation, distinctly carried its feet behind, as also do *Alcedo ispida* and *Halcyon smyrnensis*, as I have been able to observe with wild birds; though the former takes a lot of watching to determine a point like this! The Laughing Jackass (*Dacelo gigas*) carries the legs behind also, as I made out with the keeper's assistance in the fine aviary at the London Zoological Gardens, when in England on leave last year (1897).

With Barbets my only observations that were at all satisfactory were made on a specimen of *Thereiceryx zeylonicus* in a very large compartment of the Bird House in the Calcutta Zoological Gardens. Here this bird constantly kept its feet drawn up to the body when on the wing. Some Blue-cheeked Barbets (*Cyanops asiatica*) in a smaller compartment in another house, did the same, but for reasons to be presently given I do not set so much value on this observation.

Of Woodpeckers I have observed only two individuals—of our common Gold-backed Woodpecker (*Brachypternus aurantius*); a young female I kept myself and let out both in the open and in my room, and a male in the large aviary in the Zoological

Gardens above referred to. Both birds carried the feet drawn up to the body like the Barbets, or like Passerine birds (*f*). In the case of Cuckoos I have observed, with wild birds, that both the Koël (*Eudynamis honorata*) and the Crow-pheasant (*Centropus sinensis*) carry their feet behind when well under way. I have seen this particularly well in the case of the last species, whose feet in flight have exactly the same position behind as I have seen in a Pheasant and a domestic fowl, in England. A *Hierococcyx* appeared to have its feet drawn up in a short flight.

Domestic fowls, however, in their short flights, usually carry their feet in front, and this I noticed in a young *Centropus* I had free, but tame, in the Museum compound, and in a Koël in the large aviary above referred to. As this is done by Pigeons also when starting, though they afterwards extend their feet behind, I do not feel absolutely certain about the Woodpeckers, Barbets and Hoopoes, but as I never saw any backward extension of the feet in these birds, I think that the forward position is really the permanent one in them, though I should have liked a good look at a bird in a long flight overhead, at liberty if possible.

With regard to the Parrot and Roller, though these birds were confined, the former had plenty of room for a long flight, and as to the latter, I have never met with any bird which *first* extends its feet behind and *then* draws them up, so that I consider the observation on these as sufficiently conclusive for the species in question, if not for their allies.

From these experiences I conclude that, supposing the same habit of carrying the feet to run through a family, the forward position of the feet in flight probably characterises Hoopoes, Woodpeckers, and Barbets, and the backward one certainly obtains among Kingfishers, Rollers, Hornbills, Cuckoos, and Parrots.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SCIENTIFIC AVICULTURE.

SIR,—I was much interested in Dr. Butler's article on "Scientific Aviculture" in the April number of the Magazine, p. 101, vol. iv.

I quite agree with the views therein expressed, and in this connexion I should like to know whether measures have been taken to secure the lodgment of complete copies of the Magazine, from its commencement, in some of the leading scientific libraries, *e.g.*, that of the Zoological Society in Hanover Square, so that they may always be available for reference. If

(*f*) There are, however, exceptions among the Passerine Birds; a well known example of which is the Corn Bunting.—A. G. B.

this has not been done, we can hardly blame naturalists if they do not follow avicultural results. *(g)*

If aviculturists, however, are remiss in recording their experiences, it must be acknowledged that naturalists are most inattentive to living birds in captivity; and so the former should take every means of publishing the knowledge they acquire as widely as possible—in the *Zoologist*, for instance, as well as in our little publication, which, I fear, is probably less well known among scientific ornithologists than it deserves to be.

F. FINN.

FOOD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

SIR,—It is with great reluctance that I continue this discussion, but inasmuch as Mr. Perkins ignores facts which have been clearly stated, I feel it a duty to the Society as well as to myself to repeat them here.

As regards his first assertion that, "If a Tanager may be called a Finch, surely a Nightingale may be called a Warbler," I must reply that, according to Dr. Sclater, a Tanager is simply a dentirostral Finch, that is to say, a fruit-eating Finch whose beak has been adapted to its mode of feeding; whereas a Nightingale is merely a small Thrush, having spotted young; and is about as nearly related to the Warblers as the Tanagers are: the same is true also of the Chats.

His second statement, respecting Dr. Bradburn, hardly needs a reply; for anyone who has read the book (I believe I was its first reviewer) will find that raw or cooked meat is recommended by its author for the Song-Thrush, Missel-Thrush, Blackbird, Ring Ouzel, Skylark (by implication—the Wood-lark), the Shorelark, Meadow-Pipit, Tree-Pipit, etc., etc., etc. The book is a fairly good one, but contains some serious blunders, one of which is—"Never attempt to hand-rear Wagtails of any description or you will fail." I do not doubt that the cause of Dr. Bradburn's failure to rear this least difficult of all birds, was—that he gave scraped raw beef to the nestlings.

I do not *suppose* that Mr. Perkins makes an arbitrary distinction between British and Foreign birds: if he reckons the Nightingale British because it comes here in the spring, and the Blue-throat Foreign because it comes here in the autumn, I *know* that he does so. The Redstart and Whinchat are both said to eat growing corn, and the Redstart and Wheat-ear to eat fruits: the Redstart which I now possess, and have had for nearly two years, lives principally upon bread and seed; for the egg and ants' cocoons in its mixture are usually seized by other birds before it can get more than a taste. On the other hand the American Blue-bird is almost exclusively insectivorous until the autumn, when it does what Mr. Perkins credits the Nightingale with doing; yet who will say that bread disagrees with a Blue-bird? Not I, certainly, for I have my male still in perfect health, and I purchased it from Mr. Abrahams, I think, at least nine years ago.

I will, however, candidly confess, that Mr. Fulljames' *practical* experience has so far convinced me that a Nightingale may be better without bread (even though it *may* be able to digest it), that I give none to my

(g) The Avicultural Magazine is forwarded monthly to the Library of the Zoological Society of London, and also to the Zoological Library at the Nat. Hist. Museum, South Kensington. We believe that complete copies of the Magazine from its commencement are preserved at both these Libraries.—ED.

present bird; but feed it upon Abrahams' food, yolk of egg, ants' cocoons (*h*) and mealworms; I give the food all mixed together (but not damped), and I sometimes sprinkle in a little *Zeke*, the new "dried flies" now being imported; these are greedily eaten by all insectivorous birds.

A. G. BUTLER.

SIR,—I am sorry that I cannot comply with Mr. Phillipps's request that I should give my personal experiences of the food of the wild Nightingale, for the simple but sufficient reason that I have, so far as I am aware, never even seen a wild Nightingale. I confess with much sorrow, though without shame, that almost the whole of my sixty-two years have been passed amongst bricks and mortar: even when in America I was nearly always in New York or Montreal (though I should not, under any circumstances, have been able to add to my knowledge of the Nightingale on *that* side of the "herring-pond!").

As to captive Nightingales, my experience is that they *will* eat fruit. When I lived at Birmingham in the seventies I had several Nightingales, most of which would eat a little fruit occasionally, but never freely or as if they cared for it. I fed them on a mixture of ants' eggs, hard-boiled egg, and a little powdered biscuit, and I now believe that if I had omitted the biscuit and given the yolk of egg without the white my success would have been greater. The Nightingale which I now have has, up to the present, refused to eat fruit. I feed him on soaked ants' eggs, with a little of Abrahams' egg now and then, and at least seven or eight mealworms a day (*i*).

SEPTIMUS PERKINS.

BRITISH BIRD NOTES.

SIR,—I have been staying this spring in a rural part of Kent, about ten miles from Canterbury; perhaps a few notes on the birds I have seen may be of interest to some of the members.

The nesting season was generally rather late, owing to the cold winds and frequent rain. I heard the Nightingale for the first time on the 4th April, and the Cuckoo on the 9th. Nightingales have been numerous. I found one nest containing five eggs on the 14th May. This was on the ground, in a bunch of nettles, at the back of a stack of wood. The eggs all hatched, and the young ones had flown by the 2nd June. When I cautiously looked at the nestlings, the birds made a good deal of noise, and came close to me with their tails up, in a very excited and angry manner. Linnets built both in the hedges by the roadside, and in short bushes on the slopes of the Downs. I had seven nests under view, one with four eggs that were almost white, without any spots. Of these seven nests, four had the eggs taken, I think by other birds, probably Jays, as there were two pairs near by. The eggs were broken in the nest, and the contents eaten. One nest of young Linnets was dragged out by some boys, from whom I captured it. As it was useless to attempt to replace it, I took the little things home, placed nest and young in a basket, and hand-fed the birds

(*h*) The ants' cocoons are the last things eaten, but all the egg disappears.—A. G. B.

(*i*) Thank you: books are responsible for many avicultural errors. But I must not crow too loudly, for on June 9th my English Nightingale deliberately went up to, and gave eight decided pecks at, the half-rotten remains of a partially devoured cherry (put down for but little regarded by the Golden Orioles—books again), ignoring many sound good ones scattered around.—R. P.

every two hours with scalded rape and crushed biscuit, mixed into a paste with milk, and given warm. They are now fledged and flying in a large cage.

There are several Nightjars about. I nearly trod on two eggs which were laid on the ground in an open space in a wood. They have apparently deserted the eggs, as they are cold, and I have not seen the birds near since, but I hear their peculiar whirring noise at dusk. The Nightjar is an object of superstition with many of the country people in Kent. The idea that, when they are hawking round for moths of an evening, they are trying to strike the passers by with their wings, is common. And if they touch a child, it is thought that that child will cease to grow.

I found the pretty little domed nest of the Wood Warbler, made of grass and lined with hair. It was at the foot of a small elder bush, and, to my regret, came to grief. Broken egg shells, a torn nest, and a number of feathers on the ground, showed that some enemy had surprised the hen. The Red-backed Shrike, or Butcher Bird, built in a hedge near the house. The cock constantly sat on a high twig, nearly always in the same place, and I found the nest within a few yards of his perch. Three young ones hatched, but I can find no "larder." Does this bird always have a larder, such as the one in the Museum at South Kensington? The nest is very like that of the Greenfinch. The latter bird is very plentiful, the nests close to the road and easy to find.

The slaughter that goes on at nesting-time in many of these country places is enormous. The Wild Birds' Protection Act is completely ignored. Gangs of boys and young men start out on Sundays, and tear out all the nests they can find, smashing the eggs, and killing the young ones. I have spoken to farmers and others, asking if they cannot try to stop this wholesale massacre that goes on on their land. But as a rule they are inclined to approve of it, and appear to think that all birds are vermin, and should be treated the same as rats and mice. I have found the same state of things in Hampshire, Sussex, Devonshire, and Somerset. Can no influence, that is of any practical use, be brought to bear to prevent this? A. CRAFER.

BREEDING CHERRY FINCHES.

SIR,—I bought a pair of Cherry Finches in August last. They were not long in my aviary before they took possession of a German travelling cage, but it was not until the end of March that I suspected they were busy. I did not, of course, satisfy my curiosity on the point for fear of disturbing them. The last week in April three fully-fledged birds, strong on the wing, emerged from the nest; a fourth I found dead, having evidently been the weak one of the brood, and insufficiently fed. Two are now fine birds; the third, unfortunately, was the victim of an accident. The parents were capital feeders, and it was very interesting to watch them following their young ones from tree to tree, and guarding them from any other bird which ventured near them. My room is tenanted by quite twenty pairs of Finches, Mannikins, and Canaries, and one pair of Goldfinches (forty to fifty birds in all). I believe the Cherry Finches are already busy again. (*f*) M. HUSBAND.

(*f*) The Cherry Finch (*Aidemosyne modesta*) has been bred in this country before, one young bird being reared by Mr. Cronkshaw in 1895 (see Avic. Mag. vol. ii., p. 30)—but the occurrence appears to be very unusual, though it is hard to say why this should be the case.—ED.

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(Continued from page 2 of cover).

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Miss GRACE ASHFORD, The Birks, Branksome Wood Road, Bournemouth.
Proposed by Miss HADOW.

Mr. C. V. BULSTRODE, Hedgerly Lodge, Madingly Road, Cambridge.
Proposed by Mr. BONHOTE.

Mr. HENRY T. HUTT, 24, Cockspur Street, London.

Mr. SAMUEL BURGE, Ivy Cottage, Fairford.
Proposed by The Hon. and Rev. H. G. DUTTON.

Mr. [illegible] WELLS, Chapel Road, Worthing.
Proposed by Mr. SETH-SMITH

The Hon. Lady HARDINGE, Bencombe, Dursley, Glos.
Proposed by Mr. BOUSKILL.

THE SCRUTINEER'S REPORT AS TO THE ELECTION OF THE COUNCIL.

189, East India Road, LONDON, E.,
19th Oct., 1896.

The following is the result of the Election of the Council of the Avicultural Society for 1896-7.

1.	Dr. A. G. BUTLER	85	Elected.	10.	Mr. T. MARSHALL	45	Elected.
2.	Dr. C. S. SIMPSON	81	,,	11.	Mr. J. SERGEANT	44	,,
3.	Mr. J. LEWIS BONHOTE	67	,,	12.	Mr. D. SETH-SMITH	41	,,
4.	Mr. REGINALD PHILLIPPS	64	,,	13.	Mr. C. L. ROTHERA	40	
5.	Rev. H. D. ASTLEY	58	,,	14.	Mr. W. H. St. QUINTIN	40	
6.	Mr. A. F. WIENER	56	,,	15.	Dr. G. C. WILLIAMSON	40	
7.	Mr. W. SWAYSLAND	53	,,	16.	Mrs. LESLIE WILLIAMS	38	
8.	Miss LLEWELYN	47	,,	17.	Mr E. G. B. MEADE-WALDO	29	
9.	Mr. V. CASTELLAN	46	,,	18.	Mr. GEORGE C. SWAILES	18	

87 members voted. 3 voting papers not signed—votes lost in consequence.

T. MARSHALL, *Scrutineer.*

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Abbreviations:—"fr." means "fresh imported," "o.c." "old cage-bird," "c. 2 y." "caged 2 years," "c. 1 m." "caged 1 month," "f." "fine condition," "ff." "very fine condition," "d." "*defective*" or not in good plumage," "c.m." "cage-moulted," "c." "in colour," "c.c." "in full colour."

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FOR THE STUDY OF

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As has been previously announced, it is intended to issue, this year, a series of four hand-coloured plates, similar in style to those which appeared last year. The first plate of the series appeared in December, the second in July, and the third this month. Members who wish for these *coloured* plates will be asked to pay an extra subscription of 5/-, and, as an additional privilege, will have all their Magazines dispatched by letter-post, and protected by a sheet of straw-board.

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(Continued on page 3 of cover).



WHITE-EARED GRASSFINCH ♂ ♀

(Poephila leucotis).

From Living Specimens and Nest in Mr. Phillipps' Aviary.

THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. IV.—No. 46. *All rights reserved.* AUGUST, 1898.

THE WHITE-EARED GRASSFINCH.

(Poephila leucotis).

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

My experience of the subject of this paper is not a lengthened one; and consequently there is a possibility that a longer acquaintance with the species may cause me to take a different view of some of the facts and fancies gathered up to date, and now about to be recorded.

A dealer told me, not very long ago, that he would never buy a White-eared Finch again as it could not bear a journey, all of his having died when sent on their travels. It may be useful to note, therefore, as tending to point to a want of robustness in the species, that the first pair I purchased was sent an unnecessary journey owing to the absence of the ordinary elements of care. Of the five I have had, these two alone have ever shewn signs of sickness, one dying within the month, and the other, although still alive, being delicate, and not likely to make old bones.

These first two birds greatly won my heart; and since their advent I have regarded the species as quite one of the nicest of the small seed-eaters. It is not gaudy, yet the shades of colour in a good specimen are exceptionally chaste and delicate; it is, as a rule, of a gentle and amiable disposition, quiet, and the reverse of restless, yet not dull and listless; the love song is quaint and almost pretty—quite so to my aviculturally-tuned ears; and, when there are several together, they occasionally burst into quite a tiny blare of trumpeting delight. They have a funny little way, too, of assembling on the ground in a group, with heads raised on high, and of all starting off together in an excited chatter, as if raising their voices against some infringement of their privileges or curtailment of their liberties; or sometimes three will join together and say nasty

things about No. 4, who, standing near, listens attentively to all their remarks; so far, however, they have not carried out the sentence of the court and executed the offender, after the manner of Rooks. Their ordinary calls and notes, which have many variations, are of the trumpet class, and very like those of the Masked Grassfinch, but more prolonged.

I observe that different individuals of this species vary considerably in the colourings of their plumage, and, in a lesser degree, in the shades of their bills, legs, and feet; this seems to be the result of surroundings, health, and general condition rather than of sex or age. Recently I saw some in a dealer's shop and took them to be Masked Grassfinches, but on looking at them again more carefully I found they were White-ears. Although well kept, they appeared to me to be nearly as dull and dark in their colours as the Masks. Three I bought in the early spring had likewise been dull and dark where now they are light and bright, excepting the bills and legs, which perhaps retain their different shades. This close resemblance, under certain circumstances, to *P. personata* is suggestive of the close affinity which probably exists between the two species, and tempts one to be so profane as to suggest that the one may be but a bleached variety of the other. My Masks and White-ears freely associated together for some months and formed one flock, and all slept amicably together at night in the same box, and their notes are much alike as has already been remarked. One of my Masks paired off with a White-ear in a half-hearted sort of a way; and there was a good deal of indiscriminate kissing going on during the off season. The eggs from such a cross would certainly be fertile; and probably the progeny would not be altogether barren. For all that, although so nearly allied, the two species are now obviously distinct. I notice that, if approached when on the ground, where they spend a good deal of their time, the whole flock becomes still and motionless, each individual retaining its exact position and posture as if turned into stone, trusting to remain undiscovered, all of them flying off simultaneously with wild cries when the intruder comes too near. Here we have a peep into their native life, of which, unfortunately, so little seems to be known. Neither will associate with members of the other species of the genus, and when along with them endeavour to keep out of their way; and in one way or another they differ from all of them.

My first pair of White-eared Grassfinches was placed in a large aviary-cage in a warm room with the Masks and Long-tails *(P. acuticauda)*, the door being usually left open for a few hours

in the best part of the day. In the front part of the room there were two tables covered with potted plants, and in front of the tables, in the bay window, were some large eucalyptus trees, etc., for the birds to perch upon. The two White-ears soon shewed a desire to nest; there were several nesting-boxes in their house, but the presence of the other birds was too much for their timid nature, or possibly the boxes were too artificial to arouse their nesting instincts, and they soon declared their intentions of nesting in a flower-pot in which a creeper was growing, at the edge of one of the tables. Finding they were in earnest, that they would not nest anywhere else and fretted when separated from this pot, I shut off the other birds and let them have their way.

A domed nest was quickly built, with the aperture of course facing the window; but the construction was flimsy; and when in the room I could see the birds through the back of the nest; and this seemed to distress them greatly. I supplied abundance of material in the way of dried grasses, but they were exceedingly dissatisfied, and hunted all over the place for something more. I then threw down other materials, and they instantly pounced on the feathers, of which they took a large number, very thickly lining the whole interior with them, including the roof: moss, hair, etc., they did not touch. But the precious nest was far too precious to be slept in; and they quickly betrayed by their squatting instincts still closer affinity with *personata* (see page 185 of vol. III.). Before nightfall of the first day they commenced to build a squatting-place on the floor, some three or four feet from the nest but in a place from which they could keep an eye on it. I took the hint and placed some travelling cages about this spot, of one of which they immediately took possession, and in which they invariably passed the night, and also a good part of the day when the nest was finished. But day followed day and matters did not progress; the nest had been industriously and carefully built and finished, but beyond carrying up an occasional feather or piece of grass everything seemed at a standstill: something was wrong, and it was only too clear what that something was: the male was sick. For some time I had been watching him with anxiety, but he was steadily going down hill, and was soon a thing of the past. It would probably have been wiser had I resisted their strong inclinations to go to nest until I had had them longer—but they came from a good home, they were in comfortable quarters, and I thought I might risk it.

The nest was like the very fluffy head of a fair child poised in the flower-pot, but in front the dried grasses hung down, intermingled with the creeper, like a long flowing beard. The first thought naturally is that this long streamer was an accident, just the materials that had been dropped by the birds and caught in the creeper. But last autumn, after the leaves had fallen off the Virginia creeper in the garden, I found the squatting-place of the Masked Grassfinches. It was like a pedestal, about eight inches high, nearly flat at the top, and without any covering whatever, the mass of foliage amongst which it was built doubtless having been considered sufficient protection. But the most interesting point about it was that all the way down, and all round except on the side of the square post against which it was built, the ends of the dry grasses of which it was constructed hung down several inches, something like a shower bouquet. With this before me, I should hesitate to say that the "beard" of the White-ears' nest had been caused altogether by accident. This nest formed a very pretty object, and was preserved in a spare room for many weeks. It was sunk in the flower-pot slightly over one inch, and the dimensions were:—Height above rim of flower-pot, 4 in.; solid breadth, 7 in.; extreme breadth, 10 in.; solid depth, 5 in.; extreme depth, 6 in.; extreme height from tip of beard, (which was mostly 5-7 in. broad, and extended down just about as low as the creeper) over 30 in. Our artist's drawing, by the way, was not taken from this nest.

The poor little survivor, still known as The Widow, was disconsolate at the loss of her mate; and for many days her plaintive cry—which was often double like the call of a Partridge, but more prolonged—quite rang in our ears and filled our hearts with sympathy.

Some time elapsed before I was able to obtain another specimen. I had quite looked forward to the Palace Show with the hope that I might be able to obtain one there, but, splendid Show as it was, it was so far incomplete that it did not contain a single specimen of the White-eared Grassfinch. However, on February 19th, I unexpectedly dropped upon three, and carried them all home with much satisfaction. My object had always been to obtain a mate for the poor little widow, but in this respect I was unsuccessful, for the new birds turned out to be a married couple and a sedate spinster.

(To be continued).

PARROT NOTES.

By the Hon. and Rev. F. G. DUTTON.

(Continued from page 65).

II.—CONURES.

The Macaws should naturally be followed by the Conures, but here I must confess to a great *lacuna* in my knowledge of Parrots. The Conures have never appeared to me attractive from any one point, neither that of colour, nor of intelligence, nor of harmlessness, nor of silence. They seem to me noisy, mischievous, indifferent talkers, and not particularly beautiful. The Patagonian Conure I have been tempted to try, but I feared that it might prove as noisy as a Macaw, and more destructive. I had a pair of White-eared Conures, which were given to me because one picked itself. They were turned into an aviary, but they shewed no sign of wishing to breed, and as they were wild and uninteresting I parted with them.

I had in my charge for some time four specimens of *solstitialis*. These certainly were beautiful. All four slightly differed in colour, which may have been owing to their being young birds. They resembled Jendayas, but were of a more brilliant orange and red. Bechstein says they learn to speak easily and well. Russ makes no remark upon their qualities as pets. These were noisy and wild, and though I put them under the charge of a woman who was particularly fond of animals, they never became tamer as long as I had them. Perhaps had they been kept singly they might have grown tamer.

The one really fascinating Conure I have seen was a specimen of *luteus*, or, as the British Museum Catalogue calls it, *guarouba*. This was a specimen which was deposited at the Zoological Gardens, and was for sale for £10. It was extraordinarily tame. You could swing it about by one leg or by the tail; it would lie on its back in your hand, and delighted in being played with; it was said to be a good talker. The plate of it in "Parrots in Captivity" is a good one. In that it will be seen that the flight feathers are green, and I hardly think that is the idea one gets from the description of it in the British Museum Catalogue. It is a lovely gold lemon yellow, with white beak and feet. Later on Mr. Bartlett had two young ones, which were very fairly tame and nearly all green. Those three are the only living specimens I have seen, and with them comes to an end all that I can say about Conures.

III.—THE HAWK-HEADED PARROT.

Perhaps the Hawk-headed Parrot *(Deroptyus accipitrinus)* which forms a genus by itself, may best come after the Conures. I take the description from the British Museum Catalogue, which, however, classes it after *Pionus*, and puts it away altogether from *Conurus*.

"*Adult male.* Green; head brown, frontal edge and lores darker; pileum hoary grey (I should have called it muddy white); sides of the head with hoary shaft-streaks; long feathers of the nape, and feathers of the breast and abdomen, dark red with the edges blue; bastard wing, primary coverts, and primaries black; secondaries green, with the tips black, slightly tinged with blue; tail feathers green, tinged with blue towards the tip, the blue increasing towards the outer feather, which has the outer web blue, except at the base; greater under wing-coverts, quills, and tail feathers below, black; the lateral tail-feathers have dull red spots at the bases of the inner webs; bill dusky horn colour: feet black; iris brown. Total length 14 inches; wing 8; tail 6·4.

Specimens from Ecuador and Maranham are larger."

Perhaps these latter may account for Russ saying the bird is almost as large as a Raven. Certainly I never saw one as large as a Rook.

It has a curious habit of puffing out all its head and neck feathers when excited, like the Salmon-crested Cockatoo.

They are not very common, and are more often sent or brought over privately. Dr. Greene found one a very good talker. That has not been my experience. The birds I had were not very tame, and the tamest, when it got used to me, was treacherous, and would bite when I put its tins into the cage. It was very noisy at times. I think their character as pets is very like that of the Conures, whatever their structure may be. I expect one may say of all that, if you rear the young by hand, you might find the cock birds clever and companionable, but that unless they are quite tame, they are better in a Zoological Garden than in a private house.

CONURES.

By O. E. Cresswell.

I do not for a moment pretend to have any wide knowledge of Conures; but what experience I have is far more favourable to the genus than that of Mr. Dutton. I have had but four, and have them all now, for Conures are extremely hardy and I fancy long-lived, and I never tire of any feathered pets. Before I come to them I would say of the *Conurus luteus* (*a*) or "Queen of Bavaria's" Parrakeet that the only specimen I have seen, a very splendid one, in the Parisian Jardin d'acclimatation, was richer and deeper in hue than the pretty illustration in "Parrots in Captivity." I believe I described its colour in my account of the said garden as being the richest amber. No doubt the depth of colour depends on the bird's age.

The first of my Conures, which I have had towards six years, is a Patagonian. He came to me from Mr. Abrahams' establishment with the character of a "tame and talking bird." It was a long while before he talked here, but when he once began he rapidly improved, learnt more words and sounds, and his utterance of them is the clearest I have ever heard from any Parrot; he is very clever, indeed cunning, and unfortunately will never talk or do anything to order. He knows perfectly when one wishes to show him off, and is immediately silent. He spends much of his time in a verandah near the hall door, and I have known him often persistently silent when visitors were looking at him and other birds, and before their carriage had gone half-a-minute he was jabbering absurdly. He is a great respecter of persons, perfectly quiet when well-dressed people call, but makes an appalling noise if disagreeable-looking tramps arrive, and never stops shrieking till somebody he knows comes out, and then he is instantly silent. He knows everybody on the premises, but if a new gardener or groom arrives he summons us on their first, and probably their second, appearance; then he understands that they are to be tolerated. He is never disagreeably noisy, unless he thinks something is wrong. He imitates a hen which has laid an egg, perfectly; with voice and beak against the bars he catches exactly the various sounds of sawing wood; for one boy he would dance absurdly, and is suspected of mocking a maid whom he sees resting her head upon her hand by a window. Certainly he puts up his foot, and rests his head sideways upon

(*a*) *Conurus guarouba* of the Cat. B. Brit. Mus.—D. S.-S.

it in a most lackadaisical fashion. Apparently he is impervious to cold, and is quite happy when his water-dish contains a block of ice.

The next of my Conures are a little bright green pair with orange breasts—Cactus Conures (*Conurus cactorum*). I have had them about five years, they don't talk, but are always merry and bright, and seem to have great capacity for enjoying life. At any time they will go into a strange sort of ecstasy, jabbering and fluttering and rushing towards me if I come up to the cage or aviary (for I have at times turned them into an aviary), but if any one else is too near they are shy and won't do this. When, however, I have been away for any time, and then reappear, their delight knows no bounds, all shyness goes, and before any company they continue their jabbering and flutterings as long as I will look at them.

My fourth Conure is a late acquisition. In February I saw, in a grimy little London shop, a St. Thomas' Conure (*Conurus pertinax*); he is slightly larger than the Cactus Conures, bright green with orange forehead, and back of the head golden. He is tame and funny, and is said to say a few words very plainly—but he has not said them to me yet. I must confess he is noisy, especially when he is in my library and can just hear a party of other parrots out of doors, and another contingent in another room. It is funny how Parrots, which are fearfully jealous of each other when in close quarters, never cease to call and answer each other when separated. The Latin epithet for this species, *pertinax*, sounds strange, but I am inclined to think was not rashly conferred. Through many mornings my bird screeches with real pertinacity. When alone I am almost unconscious of such noises, but when friends are announced certain Parrots as a matter of course are carried out of the room. The strong health of the Conure tribe is one of their greatest advantages, and many of them are gaudily lovely. The Patagonian, with his quaint hues of olive, his underparts of lemon and bright fire-colour, and above all his beautiful flesh-coloured feet, is a unique Parrot. My own Patagonian has by far more character than any other Parrot I have ever possessed, and is, I believe, capable of much further education, but I have too many birds to fully bring out the talents of all.

THE NESTING OF THE PEKIN ROBIN.

By the Rev. C. D. Farrar.

Pekin Robins are among the loveliest birds imported into this country. They usually arrive about February or March, and can often be purchased for as low a price as 5s. a pair. The reason of this is that, being half insectivorous birds, very few amateurs keep them properly, and consequently they soon die off. Another reason why so few are kept is that Pekins are very soft feathered birds; and, after being a few days in a dealer's box-cage, they present a really deplorable appearance,—wings frayed out and tails like a stumpy paintbrush. This comes of their habit of clinging to the bars of the cage. Personally, I do not think Pekins suitable to cage life at all; unless they are very tame. I have always found them most hardy. Mine are kept in a big outdoor aviary all the year round, and they never seem to ail anything, and care nothing for the severest cold. The only sort of weather they object to is "Fog;" but all birds do that. Pekins are the most gentle and inoffensive birds, and may be kept with perfect safety in any company. They are tremendous fellows to bathe, and in hot weather are in and out of the water all day.

I saw, somewhere, that it is not safe to put them in an aviary, as they *steal* eggs. I don't believe it one bit. I have had them in an aviary with nests all round them, and they never touched an egg or a young bird (*b*). I have two pairs, at present, in an aviary.

I find the best staple food for Pekins is Abrahams' yolk of egg; they are also very fond of white millet, which they swallow whole. They must have some insect food; they like mealworms better than anything else, and will eat small "clocks," big ones they can't swallow. Of course in a large garden aviary they catch a great many live things for themselves. They are fond of maggots, and a decaying old hen is to them a joy for ever—or at any rate as long as she holds together.

The cock birds sing pretty well, but nothing to boast about; the hens do not sing, as so often stated—they simply

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(*b*) Has Mr. Farrar ever read these words of a well-known writer? "To deny what is outside one's own experience, however large that experience may be, proves it capable of increase."—Ed.

Last month, in one of my aviaries, I had twenty-four eggs and five or six newly-hatched young eaten by these birds.—A. G. B.

repeat a few bars as a call note. Talk about "scolding;" but two Pekins can scold if you go near their nest.

In breeding, of course the first thing is to get a pair. The only sure way to distinguish the cock from the hen is by the top of his head, which is always a beautiful mossy green colour, and his eye markings, which are primrose colour. The hen has a pale greyish crown and mouse-coloured eye patches. Both birds have red on their wings and the white tail edging, which are stated by Dr. Greene to be characteristic of the cocks alone. Far more hens than cocks are imported.

It is not wise to look for any great breeding results from Pekins under the most *favourable conditions*. In a large garden aviary the best results will be obtained. I utterly refuse to believe that Pekins would nest in a cage or bird-room. I saw an account of *alleged* nesting in a back number of the Reports of the U. K. F. C. B. S. *(c)*. I say alleged for this reason, that the description of the young was utterly fallacious.

I have had several near shaves of success in past seasons, but this year victory has crowned the efforts of my Pekins. Last year we got as far as a completed nest; this year we have gone two better—eggs and young. My Pekins began operations early in May, by building a beautiful little nest of roots and fibre, lined with horsehair, in a box tree. The nest is really a work of art and very cunningly hidden. The hen laid three eggs, very large for the size of the bird, a bluish white in colour, heavily blotched with chocolate at the big end. The parents take it in turn to sit; the hen takes the day nursing, and the cock relieves her about 6 p.m. The time of incubation was about fourteen days. On looking into the nest *very casually* as I passed, I was delighted to see two youngsters and one addled egg. This disappeared in about three days, but whether eaten or broken I can't say. At first the youngsters were fed from the crop. I saw the whole operation through a "knot hole" close to the nest. The old birds do not carry out the excreta, but eat it. After a few days they began to feed on mealworms, which they first killed; these did not,

(c) In the Report of the United Kingdom Foreign Cage Bird Society for November, 1891, where an anonymous account of the breeding of Pekin Nightingales is reprinted from the *Bazaar, Exchange and Mart*. The account bears every mark of genuineness, and there seems to be no ground for Mr. Farrar's suggestion that it is apocryphal. Whether or not the writer's observations were in every respect careful and accurate is of course a different matter, upon which we express no opinion; but we imagine that where the anonymous writer and Mr. Farrar differ, the one is, *prima facie*, as likely to be right as the other.—Ed.

fortunately, prove "too stimulating," as the youngsters evidenced by their ready enjoyment of them.

Of course I had the good sense and taste not to go poking about the nest. I did all my observations through a "knot hole," where I could see all, myself unseen.

To-day the young have flown (June 11th). They are queer little things; dark slate colour all over, with hardly a trace of eye markings; no tails; a tiny yellow edging on the big wing feathers; pink legs, and horn-coloured beaks. When first hatched, I forgot to say, they were perfectly naked; at about the eighth day they got a sort of bluish colour where the feathers were coming through, and when next I saw them they were nearly full feathered. I say *pink and naked* when hatched for this reason, that in the account of hatching in the Report of the U. K. F. C. B. S. the young were spoken of as covered with a hairy sort of fluff, which makes me think that the whole account was apocryphal. Besides the extraordinary things the old birds were asked to feed on. "What would they give the young?" I quote from the writer:—"Egg? No. Biscuit? No. Bread and milk? No. Crushed hemp seed? No. Mealworms cut up? Yes." I wonder what the youngsters did while these experiments were being tried.

There is such a *scolding* now each time I go into the aviary to feed, and it is quite amusing to see how the old birds will wait about, with their beaks full of mealworms, until I am gone, lest I should see where the precious babies are hidden.

I might give one word of caution. In sending Pekins on a journey, never forget to put in a sponge of water in the pot, or the birds will arrive in a moribund condition, and will the next day shuffle off this mortal coil, if they do not do so the same night. I will relate my other breeding experiences at the end of the season; but I thought our readers would be glad to hear of a genuine case of Pekins nesting.

Since writing the above the Pekins have built another nest high up in an Elder tree and have again three eggs. I have however, taken the nest, as I have a Virginian Nightingale setting in the same aviary, due to hatch, and cannot afford to keep both.

CORRESPONDENCE.

HYBRID CARDINALS.

SIR,—In the last October number of the *Avicultural Magazine*, Mr. Moerschell wrote: "Some years ago a friend of mine had eggs from a Virginian cock and a Green Cardinal hen, but somehow they were all broken, but it would be worthy an attempt, provided a very quiet place could be given, and a liberal supply of mealworms."

Having at that time just completed building a new aviary, and having both these birds in a mixed aviary, I thought I would try the experiment, more especially as the green hen had killed already four small birds (selecting always those approaching her own colour).

The cock I have had in an outdoor aviary through three winters, and the hen two.

The aviary I placed them in was divided into two, one part all covered in with wood and glass, which I use for canary breeding, the other part an open wire flight (in which I placed the birds) 6 ft. × 6 ft. × 6 ft., partly covered on the top with three sides open, and on the fourth side covered with Virginian cork to within two feet of the ground. The hen started building about five weeks ago, making a nest among the cork, much like a Blackbird's nest, and laid three eggs much like those of a Thrush, but longer in shape; I interfered very little with her, so I was unable to tell to a few days when the eggs were laid. On Saturday last, wishing to show a friend the somewhat peculiar-shaped eggs, I found to my surprise two were hatched, and the young are now three days old.

To my great sorrow the cock escaped the following day; he remained about the garden all day singing his loudest, but about six o'clock I lost sight and hearing of him, and I much fear I shall never see him again. The hen seems quite indifferent to his going, and continues feeding and sitting on her young. It will be interesting to know what colour the birds will be from two so differently coloured parents. I learn from those who have bred the Green Cardinal that the hen leaves the feeding of the young after leaving the nest to the cock, so I much fear that the absence of the cock will be fatal to the young.

Mr. Moerschell says he gave amongst his food finely minced mealworms, but I find my hen prefers to take them whole, biting them down herself to a convenient size. I am giving besides, egg and biscuit, boiled millet, sunflower seeds, ants' eggs, and plain millet, hemp, and canary, with a few oats, and much green food.

I was greatly surprised to find the eggs fertile as the two birds appeared perfectly indifferent to each other since they have been together. The cock has been singing at his best this year, but last year he scarcely sang a note.

I must apologise for my rather lengthy letter, but, as I believe this is the first recorded cross between these two Cardinals, the matter may be of interest to many of our members.

CLAUDE VERRALL.

FOOD FOR SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

SIR,—Ornithological classification is a fine field for controversy, for no two writers agree, and each is persuaded that he alone is right and everyone else wrong. No doubt Dr. Butler and I could go on for a good many months with this very pretty dispute as to whether or not it is more improper to call a Nightingale a Warbler than to call a Tanager a Finch; and he ought to get the best of it, for is he not a big scientific man, and I only a little aviculturist? No doubt for every "authority" I could quote it would be easy for him to cite two on the opposite side—such is the charming finality of this puzzling branch of science.

"But scientists, who ought to know,
Assure us that they must be so.
Oh! let us never, never doubt
What nobody is sure about!"

I will therefore content myself with asking a few questions, and then leave the matter. (1) Are not the *Sylviidæ* according to Dr. Sharpe, Mr. Howard Saunders, and Dr. Butler himself, included in the family *Turdidæ*? (2) Are not the *Tanagridæ* placed in a *separate* family by Dr. Sharpe and most modern ornithologists, none of whom include them in the *Fringillidæ*? (3) Are not birds in the same family presumably more nearly related than those in different families? (4) If all these questions be answered in the affirmative, as I think they must be, how does Dr. Butler justify his statement that the Nightingale "is about as nearly related to the Warblers as the Tanagers are"? *(e)*

I could only think, for the moment, of two Foreign cage-birds which would require treatment similar to that of our Nightingale, and Dr. Butler very properly reminds me that one of these belongs to the British list—thus strengthening my argument that nearly all the foreign soft-billed birds imported are frugivorous rather than strictly insectivorous. I am glad that Dr. Butler is disposed to admit that there may be a better food for Nightingales than the mixture of Abrahams' Food, preserved egg, potato, and bread, which I understand he prescribes for all other birds, and I hope that he will continue his experiments, and in course of time come to the conclusion, which most of us have come to long ago, that there is no such thing as a universal food for soft-billed birds, but that every group requires different treatment. So long as he sticks to the idea that all soft-billed birds will thrive on the same food, whether it be Abrahams' Food or somebody else's, he must pardon me for drawing a distinction, in my own mind, between the aviculture of a scientist and "scientific aviculture." I learn from a recent letter of his in the *Feathered World* that he uses six to eight large tins of Abrahams' Food per month. Has it never struck him that he is paying rather dearly for the egg and ants' eggs contained in it?

SEPTIMUS PERKINS.

This discussion has been the means of eliciting much useful informatic and I am very grateful to those who have given us the benefit of their experience. I am sorry to find that it seems now in danger of degenerating into a rather personal controversy on points which have little or nothing to

---

(e) Birds in the same family are often far less nearly related than those in different families. The *Fringillidæ* and *Ploceidæ* differ chiefly in their manner of building.—A. G. B.

do with the main question. Surely there must still be a large number of members who can and will contribute something of value and interest to the discussion?

I think that novices sometimes overlook the importance of making the food of a proper consistency. It is essential to a good food not only that the materials should be right but that it should be properly prepared. Generally speaking, food for "soft-bills" should be "crumbly-moist," and never sloppy on the one hand nor sticky and clay-like on the other. Nor, again, should it be a dry powder. Many have a prejudice against milk sop, on the ground that it is too laxative. It certainly *is* laxative if given either in too great quantity, or too sloppy, or sweetened. I make it of powdered lunch biscuit, on which I pour hot boiled milk, and give it to the birds *unsweetened*, and fairly stiff (too stiff to find its own level). I never allow any birds (except Lories and Lorikeets) to live entirely or even chiefly on sop, but most of mine have a little every day, and I find that it is much appreciated and apparently beneficial. It is a cheap and easy-made food, and will keep fresh for twenty-four hours. Another cause of non-success with the more delicate birds is, I think, allowing them to eat white of egg, which is very indigestible. Either the yolk only of fresh eggs, or preserved egg, should be used.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

THE GANGA COCKATOO.

SIR,—Would some member who may have a hen Ganga Cockatoo kindly say what the colour of its eye is?

The bird figured in "Parrots in Captivity" is a male, and is represented as having a bright red eye.

The cock now in my possession has a black eye.

F. G. DUTTON.

THE "IDEAL" PARROT.

SIR,—I was much interested in the account of "Tony." Nothing happens but the unexpected. If there is one species more than another where I should have said you need never hope to find the "ideal," it would have been the Alexandrine.

I never knew of one that was not intolerably noisy, at times. I think the Bengal comes very near the ideal, but for noise; it is lovely, an excellent talker, and full of character.

It is curious that "Tony," who, I presume, was a cock, should have preferred men. Bengals, certainly, have a strong perception of sex, and so have "*docilis*"—generally the hens can be handled by men and the cocks by women. I had a lovely cock Bengal and an exquisite "*docilis*." A woman could do anything with either, but they could not be trusted with men.

I should like to know *how* "Tony" was trained to be clean. And also how he came by his death.

I think the true ideal is most likely to turn up in the Senegal, Meyer's, or Rüppell's Parrots. As far as colour and charm are concerned, Mr. Fulljames' "Shining Parrakeet" would have done. But he is not a pocketable bird.

I have a Budgerigar, which would become ideal, if it belonged to a milliner. It is very tame, flies to one's shoulder, when out of the cage, and loves to have its poll scratched. It only wants to be with some one who would talk to it all day, and so teach it to talk.

F. G. DUTTON.

MYNAHS.

SIR,—Kindly let me know what species of Mynah you consider the best mimic and talker? Also, food and general treatment.

CHARLES SPEED.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Speed.

The Mynah that mimics and talks best is the Larger Hill-Mynah, *Mainatus intermedius*. Much depends on its being a young bird, as when old it does not pick up new sounds nearly so readily. The males are usually better mimics than the females; the former may often be distinguished by their bills being larger and more hooked, at any rate when of about the same age. Their talking powers are sometimes greatly exaggerated, the curious natural notes of the species being twisted into words by the mighty power of imagination. Nevertheless, some of them do talk and mimic, and they can be made into very nice pets. Just now and then the huge Javan Mynah (*Mainatus javanensis*) appears in the market. It is a magnificent bird, and ought to talk well; but I have not kept it, and cannot say whether it does.

I have been told repeatedly that it is the Small Hill-Mynah (*Mainatus religiosus*) that is the talker; but my own personal experiences and observations have taught me exactly the contrary. It is a nice bird enough, with quaint notes, but it is not to be compared with the Larger Hill-Mynah.

The Hill-Mynahs are sometimes known as Rock-Mynahs.

They are all large eaters, and should be fed on sop, fruit, cooked vegetables (boiled rice, carrots, &c.), egg, raisins, and messes generally. In this climate, at any rate, I think they should have a little meat.

They are rather offensive when kept in the house in a small cage, though they may learn to talk better under those conditions; but for their health the more exercise you can give them the better. In the summer, a garden aviary is the place for them, but they should not be exposed to cold; and, like their relations the Starlings, they dearly love something of the nature of a box to sleep in at night, especially during the winter.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

OUR BRITISH WEAVER-BIRD.

SIR,—The vulgar Sparrow is one of the last birds one would think of naming as capable of constructing a clever or artistic nest, but, when he is put to it, he is by no means such a duffer at house-building as is generally supposed: aviculturists who may happen to pass by the gardens of the Tower of London just at the present time of the year, before the leaves are fully out, may see this for themselves. (*f*) A number of the trees in this city

(*f*) This letter was written in April last.—ED.

oasis are adorned (?) with half a dozen or more big round bristly balls of rubbish, looking at a little distance like so many strange fruits; presumably the Tower itself and the giant warehouses near by do not offer the necessary holes and corners, so Mr. Sparrow is obliged to take to the trees; and when one considers that the material available for building consists of more or less dirty straw, with say about ten per cent. of string, paper, rags, and shavings mixed, and an occasional pigeon's feather, it must be acknowledged that the result is a highly creditable production. Finish, of course, there is none; but the way in which the bird gets a start with such unpromising material, making the nest not infrequently among thin twigs near the top of the tree, is really clever; and the fact that it takes some six or seven months of wind and weather to demolish it after it is done with, speaks well for the strength with which it must be woven together. This type of Sparrow's nest is common enough, it is true, but the number that one sees together at the Tower, and elsewhere in the city, makes it particularly striking.

H. C. MARTIN.

THE YELLOW-FRONTED AMAZON.

SIR,—Having recently purchased a Yellow-fronted Amazon Parrot, and not being very well up in the *Psittacidæ*, I should be glad of a little information on the following points:—

Are the sexes distinguishable, and is there anything to choose between them as far as talking powers are concerned?

Is the Yellow-fronted Amazon as apt a scholar as the Blue-fronted and other species, and after how long can one reasonably expect a newly imported bird to make any attempt at speech, *i.e.*, when every encouragement is offered?

The bird in question sneezes and coughs rather often, and, after feeding, seems to get dull, half closing its eyes and ruffling its feathers; there is also, occasionally, a watery discharge at the nostrils; does this indicate the existence of pneumonia, or is it merely a cold?

Any information will be much appreciated by

H. C. MARTIN.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Martin:—

I have been desired to answer your letter. I think the male Yellow-fronted is as good a talker as the Blue-fronted Amazon, but I doubt an old and untaught bird learning to speak. A young one should begin to say something within two or three months of importation.

The males have, I think, a larger yellow cap than the females. (*g*)

The bird, I think, has a cold. I should keep it warm, and give it chillies, and, if it eats sop, put a few drops of Tabasco sauce with it.

F. G. DUTTON.

(*g*) I may be mistaken, but I think the sexes differ in the colour of the iris.—A. G. B.

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(*Continued from page 2 of cover*).

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The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 7 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable. Each advertisement should be written on a separate sheet of paper, with the name and address of the advertiser at the foot.*

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The Subscription to Members of the Avicultural Society is 2/6, to others 5/- per annum.

Notices to Members.

NEW MEMBER.

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Proposed by Mr. Fillmer.

(Members of the Avicultural Society can join without formal election).

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THE

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BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. IV.—No. 47. *All rights reserved.* SEPTEMBER, 1898.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 5/- per annum, due on the 1st of November in each year. As from the 1st of November next the subscription will be raised to 7/6. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Aviculturul Magazine* is sent free to members monthly. Members joining at any time during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all aviculturul subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them.

If any members have any suggestions to make for improving the Magazine, or extending the usefulness of the Society in other ways, they are requested to write to the Secretary, who will submit their proposals to the Executive Committee.

A complete list of members, with their addresses, will appear in the November Magazine. In order that this list may be as correct as possible, it is particularly requested that all whose names and addresses have been wrongly spelt in the list of "New Members" will have the kindness to inform the Secretary of the error.

All members who intend to resign at the end of the year, are requested to give notice of their intention to the Secretary before the 14th of October, in accordance with Rule 10.

With a view to the forthcoming election of officers, the Secretary desires to remind the members that, under Rule 6, all (new) candidates for office must be duly proposed and seconded in writing, and that such proposals must reach him before the 14th of September. If any of the members of the Council do not intend to seek re-election, they are requested to inform the Secretary of their decision at the earliest possibe date.

The Magazine is published by Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Limited, of 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., and is dispatched by them monthly to the members. Orders for extra copies, back numbers, and bound volumes should be addressed to them and not to the Secretary.

As has been previously announced, it is intended to issue, this year, a series of four hand-coloured plates, similar in style to those which appeared last year. The first plate of the series appeared in December, the second in July, and the third in August, and the fourth will appear next month. Members who receive these *coloured* plates pay an extra 5/-.

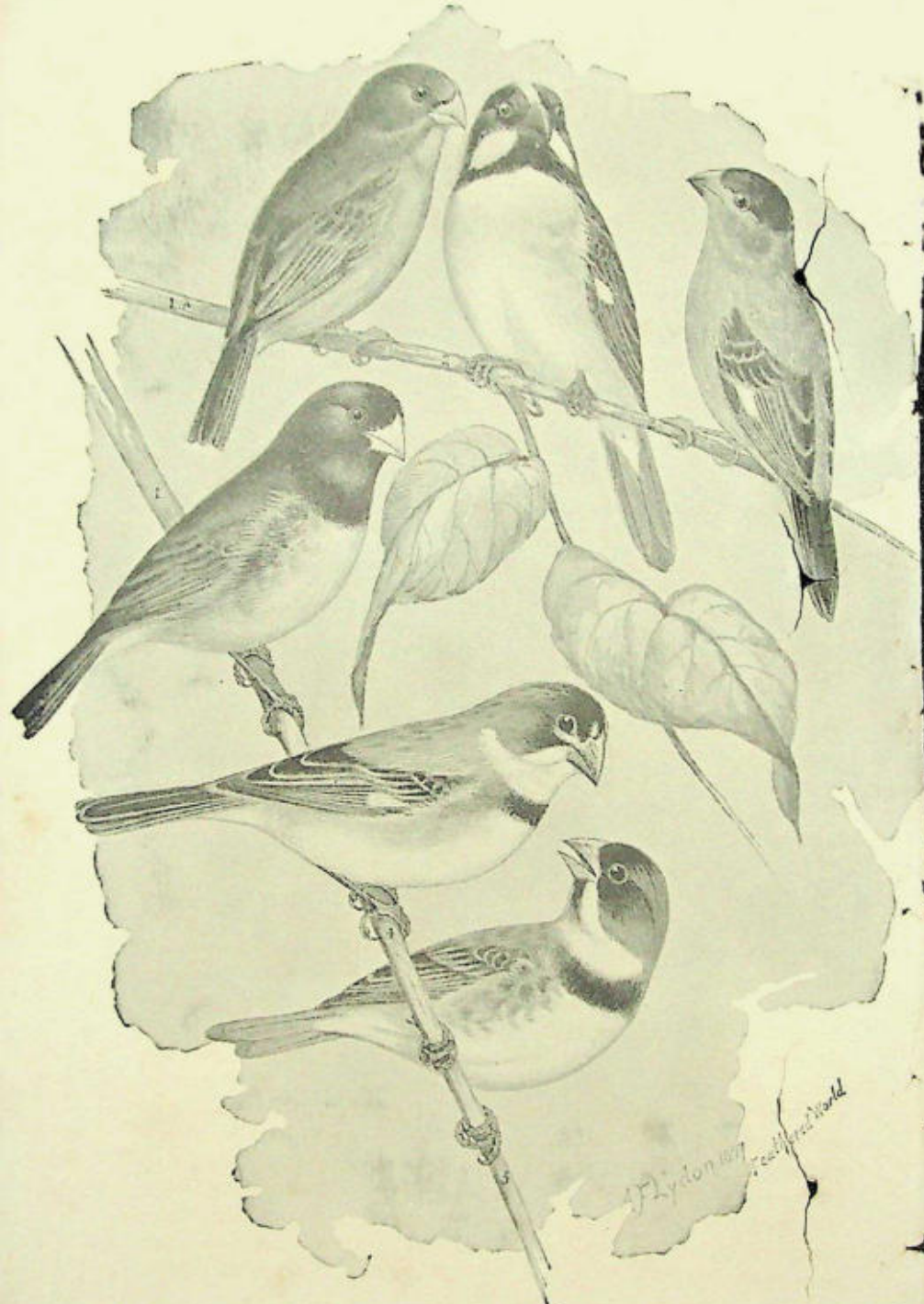
The Hon. Sec. will pay full price for clean copies of the Magazine for January and February, 1898.

A new "leaflet" has been printed, and the Secretary will be pleased to forward copies to any member on application. If members, when writing to friends interested in birds, would enclose one of these leaflets, they might do much to extend our membership.

NEW MEMBERS.

The Hon. Mrs. R. CAPEL, Moneyhill, Rickmansworth.
Mrs. D. WILLIAMSON, The Old Rectory, Stoke-next-Guildford, Surrey.
Mrs. DINGWALL, Knollys Croft, Leigham Court Road, Streatham, S.W.

(Continued on page 3 of cover).



1.—Guttural Finch. 1*a*.—Do. (Female). 2.—Lined Finch.
3.—Reddish Finch. 4.—White-throated Finch. 5.—Bluish Finch.

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THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

VOL. IV.—No. 47. *All rights reserved.* SEPTEMBER, 1898.

THE WHITE-EARED GRASSFINCH.

(Poephila leucotis).

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

(Continued from page 172).

On March 23rd, the new pair seemed anxious to nest; and in an impulsive moment, which I have not ceased to regret, I brought down the old nest and placed it in its original position. With a cry of joy the widow flew to it—perhaps hoping to find her mate, who can say! but she was promptly dispossessed by the pair, who seemed inclined to adopt it as their own forthwith; their triumph, however, was short-lived, for the other birds, now a miscellaneous horde, got wind of what was going on, and, headed by two rascally Lavender Finches who still trouble me with their looting propensities, swooping down like Vultures on to a carcase, tore the nest to shreds, and carried it off piecemeal to various boxes and holes, in spite of the White-ears' piteous cries of remonstrance.

The pair could not tear themselves away from the flower-pot. There might be time for a nest before their season was quite over I thought, so shut off the other birds, supplied materials, and placed a box on the floor where the former had been (of which they had not any cognizance), and of this they immediately took possession. A nest was quickly built in the flower-pot as before, very like the first but not so carefully constructed—the dome, for instance, barely supporting its own weight and requiring frequent pushing up from the interior, many of the feathers being shoved through; and the beard was not so long—possibly on account of the now shrivelled condition of the creeper. Little by little, however, the birds seemed to lose interest in it, there came a time when they actually slept in it, and then I saw that it was of no use, put them back with their companions, and removed the nest. A wave of warm weather once more started them off, so I brought back their nest, which

they themselves quickly pulled to pieces. Once again they set to work, and tried to build in a pot containing a geranium; but the plant did not leave them sufficient room, so I placed a little box by its side, of which they thankfully took possession, and in which they built—a squatting-place, so there is an end of the matter for this summer.

It was the nest built by the second pair which has been pictured by our artist, who has artfully brought into prominence one of the seeming peculiarities of the species, the profuse use of feathers in the building of the nest, the whole interior of each nest having been very thickly lined with them. Last year my pair of Long-tails never touched a feather in the construction either of their squatting-places, or of two nests which they built late in the year: and Mr. Todd's experience in this respect seems to have been similar (Vol. iii., p. 210). But this year the male of at any rate one of my two pairs has occasionally been seen with a feather in his bill; the Parson Finch, I think, often uses a few feathers; but neither species of Gouldian has ever touched a feather with me.

The following is a rough description of the White-eared Grassfinch. Upper parts a rather dark fawn, darker and more glossy on the crown; lower back, upper and under tail-coverts, white, with some black on the sides of the upper coverts; tail feathers black with brownish bases, graduated; a black mask round base of bill, as in *personata*; cheeks and ear-coverts, silvery white; chest, breast, etc., white washed with light buff, especially across the chest; a large black flank-patch with white blotch in front; iris, dark brown; bill, whitish yellow in life, and much lighter than in *personata*, but in skin dull and inclined to blackish; feet and legs, coral red; length, slightly over 4½ inches. Sexes alike; and in this it possibly differs from *personata*, for my male *personata* has much the larger and more curved bill, and seems to be the larger bird. My male *leucotis* occasionally seems to be stouter in the chest than the females; but now that the nesting is over I am often quite unable to pick him out from amongst the others. Although usually remarkably peaceable, lately they have taken to quarrel when going to roost: the male commenced by ejecting the male Mask whilst retaining the female in the Mormon bed-chamber—and I retaliated by removing the Masks, male and female. And again later the Widow has been forbidden the family sleeping-box, and has philosophically built a little squatting-place for herself on the floor behind the bottom of one of the window curtains.

At pages 202 and 203, vol. xiii., of the Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., the distinctive difference between the genera *Aidemosyne* and *Poephila* is given as follows:—*Aidemosyne:* Tail graduated, the two centre feathers longest, but not produced to a thread-like point. *Poephila:* Tail not so strongly graduated, but the centre feathers produced to a thread-like point. I have had five White-ears and three Masks. My male Mask seems to be fully adult, the female I have had for over fourteen months, and they are both in perfect feather; when recently placed in the garden, neither had a thread-like point to the central tail feathers, although these were long and very narrow towards the ends. Nor have any of the White-ears; nevertheless it is possible that this feature may be developed later.

Habitat, the grassy plains in the interior of North Australia.

Before closing this paper I should like to draw attention to the curious way in which the six recognised species in the genus *Poephila* are grouped in couples, the two species forming each couple being remarkably like to one another, but very different from all the others. First come the handsome Long-tailed Grassfinch, *P. acuticauda*, and the familiar Parson Finch, *P. cincta*, with their black girdles and throat spots, surly tempers, and rapid flight, chiefly differing from one another in the colour of the bill and in the formation of the tail; the sexes are alike (I am speaking cursorily), and the young like the parents but with black bills (vol. iii. p. 210). Then come the Masked Grassfinch, *P. personata*, and the White-ear, with black flank-patch instead of girdle, and mask instead of large throat-spot, amiable in temper, quiet in habits, and sexes alike. The young of *leucotis* seem to be unknown, but doubtless they will prove to be, as with *personata*, like their parents but with black bills. All of these four roost, from preference, in boxes or squatting-places of some kind; and none of them sing in the manner that the Gouldians do. Lastly, we have Gould's Grassfinch, *P. gouldiæ*, and the Beautiful Grassfinch, *P. mirabilis*, popularly classed together as Gouldians. In these the sexes are diverse, and the young, while like to one another (on this point the Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. is inaccurate), are quite different from the adults. They have neither black girdle nor flank-patch, never use feathers in the construction of their nests, and always roost in the open (towards the ends of the slender boughs of growing trees if possible, often quite amongst the leaves) except when actually sitting. Specimens that are *properly kept* moult true to colour year after year; and the two species are at any rate as

distinct from one another as are *leucotis* from *personata*, and *cincta* from *acuticauda*.

Probably the species occasionally referred to as *Poephila atropygialis* is *P. acuticauda*. Being personally unacquainted with *Poephila armitiana*, I will simply quote "May be looked upon as the golden- or yellow-headed phase of *P. mirabilis*. *Hab.* Derby, N.W. Australia, Gulf of Carpentaria."

The statements in the Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. of the total length of the different species of *Poephila* cannot be accepted as correct.

THE SONG OF THE SCARLET TANAGER.

By Arthur G. Butler, Ph. D.

In an article on the Songs of Tanagers (at p. 46 of this year's Magazine) I say of the Scarlet Tanager, "When I have kept my two fine males long enough for them to become confiding, perhaps they will give me an opportunity of forming an opinion respecting the merit of their performance."

At the commencement of July of the present year one of my males began to sing, and he has continued to do so industriously, whenever the sun has shone hotly into his flight-cage, up to the present time.

The song is soft, not unpleasing, and is perhaps capable of further development; but hitherto I have not noticed any striking resemblance to the notes of either Thrush or Robin in its performance; excepting that, as with the Thrush, the first note is repeated four times and all the other expressions or double notes are repeated: they are, however, at present too soft and gentle to remind one of a Thrush, and the general effect is rather that of the White-throated Finch's melody.

On the 18th of July, I took down the song as the bird uttered it, and carefully went over it afterwards: I render it as follows;—"*Whip, whip, whip, whip; tzewee, tzewee, tzewee; cheo, cheo, cheo, cheo, cheo, cheo, cheo; tzerwiss, tzerwiss, tzerwiss; cheo, cheo, cheo, cheo, cheo, cheo, cheo.*

The *cheo* part of the song is very liquid and always uttered seven times rapidly.

I see no likeness in any part of this song to the irregular plaintive trill of the Robin.

SOME EXPERIENCES OF THE GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER.

By Percy W. Farmborough, F.Z.S.

During the past few months there has been a great deal of discussion in the correspondence columns of our Magazine on the subject of the Warblers in captivity, and it occurred to me that I might supplement others' experiences with my own.

Some time ago, having occasion to spend a short time at Sandwich in Kent, I noticed that several specimens of the Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella nævia*) were flying about the sandy downs skirting the sea-shore at a point situated about midway between Deal and the estuary of the river Stour. For several days I made persistent efforts to discover the nests and eggs of these birds, but signally failed until about a week after commencing the search, when I was rewarded by finding a nest containing unfledged young placed rather deeply in a coarse tuft of sedge-grass (I think that that is the name of the grass I mean, it grows in tufts, is cylindrical and about two feet long) which I must have passed by and examined a score of times at least before I found the nest; and even on this occasion the nest would not have been found if it were not for the fact that the hen was flushed from the tuft of grass, thus drawing my attention to it.

The spot was marked, and, about nine or ten days afterwards, was visited once again. The young were fledged and very shy, cowering down into the nest and striving to make themselves as unobserved as possible. As I was returning to town that day, I took the brood, doubting whether they could be successfully reared. For a few days they lived, being fed on yolk of egg mixed with ants'-eggs and milk, but one by one they sickened and died.

A week later, I was obliged to go once again to Sandwich, and, only having a couple of days to spare, I took a small trap-cage and a tin box of mealworms down with me, in addition to a very powerful field-glass—one magnifying to 18 diameters. After transacting my business I retired to rest, and was up betimes the next morning. The clock was striking three as I was crossing the downs to my post of observation. The morning was beautifully clear, and bird-life was well manifested. The trap (a single one) was baited with a few mealworms, and carefully set in a large bed or clump of grass-growth covering

about thirty square yards of ground, and situated about sixty or seventy yards from the sea-shore. That the birds were about was evidenced by the occasional utterance of the grasshopper-like call. I took up a position about one hundred or a hundred and fifty yards away, and, lying down in another expanse of sedge-grass, carefully covered any likely tufts or hillocks with the field-glass. Owing to the high power of the field-glass, the field of vision was limited, and as a conseqence it took some time to go over the likely places. After a considerable time had elapsed, a bird suddenly sprang into the air not twenty yards from where I was lying, and flew off; it was joined in a few moments by two companions, and the three, to my delight, took a wavering flight to where the cage was. It was impossible to see the cage from the position I occupied, so it was necessary to be contented with keeping the glasses on the birds as they fluttered about the mass of herbage. Every now and again they disappeared from sight, but suddenly two flew upwards and went away uttering notes of alarm. As the third did not accompany them, I concluded the trap had been successful, and, on going over to investigate, I found that to be the case, for a fine young Grasshopper Warbler was inside the cage, fluttering wildly in its attempts to escape. As it was tolerably certain no more would be caught, that day at all events, I packed up and went back to where I was staying. The bird had to be left in the trap-cage it was caught in, as there was nothing else to change it into until it got to London; once there, however, it was put into its intended home—a larger cage of box pattern, about two feet long and of proportionate height and breadth—where it was left for the night.

It was fed whilst in my possession on ants'-eggs mixed with a crumbly paste of hard-boiled yolk of egg and milk, with a few mealworms now and again. The bird only survived its captivity three months, and I am not altogether satisfied with my experience of it. Perhaps I did not feed it properly; probably it pined at the loss of its freedom; but one day, although previously it had seemed in the best of health, it was found on the floor of its cage—dead. I cannot say I am pleased with myself for my capture, I often wish now that I had left the bird to enjoy its freedom. The Warblers seem particularly ill-adapted to a life of captivity, or else my experience has been an unfortunate one, for, with the exception of a Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) which lived for some time (nearly two and a half years), they have all died in a few weeks.

ON THE COURTING POSTURES OF CERTAIN DOVES.

By A. G. Butler, Ph. D.

The facts which I propose to record here are probably not new to many of our members; but circumstances have proved to me that they are not so thoroughly well known to all bird-students as to be valueless.

It is generally admitted that where a male bird possesses brilliant colours in any part of its plumage, it always makes the most of them when approaching its mate. In many of the *Columbæ* the most telling arrangement of colours is to be found on the nape, mantle, and in the open tail: it is therefore not surprising that the species of *Turtur* and *Geopelia* bow almost to the ground, at the same time drooping the wings and raising the tail fan-wise almost at right angles to the body.

During the past winter I lost my male Necklaced Dove and my female Bar-shouldered Dove. Thinking that I might safely pair up the two bereaved birds, I placed them together in one of my small aviaries, but *Geopelia humeralis* evidently did not admire *Turtur tigrinus* and attacked her so systematically that when he had half denuded her of feathers, I was compelled to remove her and purchase a supposed female of his own species: I fear, however, that I paired up these birds too late or too early, for she fared but little better than her predecessor (*a*).

When I first turned in the 'female' *G. humeralis*, the male began at once to chase her about the aviary: this was followed by the usual posture of worship. When neither bowing nor chasing seemed to awake any emotion of pleasure in the heart of his partner the male suddenly turned his back upon her, raised his head to its highest elevation, spread his tail fanwise so that it swept the earth and ran forward two or three steps with a short sharp little gutteral sound, then looked over his shoulder and repeated the action perhaps a dozen times. His rage when she ignored all his efforts was unbounded and he then commenced a system of tyrannous persecution, varied with occasional fondlings, which bade fair to reduce her to a scarecrow. However, it is evident that *G. humeralis* has two very distinct methods of showing off to its hen; which was a new fact to me.

In the Australian Crested Dove (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) the

(*a*) I finally discovered that the bird was only a small cock of the same species, and had to separate them.—A. G. B.

larger and median wing coverts are brilliantly coloured with ultramarine changing to ruby red, and emerald green changing to golden green: therefore, if this bird were to display itself exactly in the same manner as *Turtur* and *Geopelia*, its chief beauty would be concealed: it does indeed bow and spread its tail fanwise; but, instead of drooping its wings they are lifted backwards so that the coverts almost join and form a glittering rainbow of colours behind the head as the bird bows.

In *Phlogœnas luzonica* (the Bleeding-heart Pigeon) the most brilliant colouring is on the breast and this bird rarely bows to its hen, but races after her at full speed with its long legs, its outstretched neck bobbing as it runs: then as it nears her it depresses its tail, throws out its breast, retracts its head and utters a very ventriloquial coo, rocking on its feet as if the utterance disturbed its balance; at other times it slightly raises and quivers its wings cooing in a rapid staccato fashion—*gu-gu-gu-gu-gu-gu*.

I never saw *Tympanistria* show off to its mate, and suspect that it is far too sluggish to breed in any but a very large aviary, and my experience of *Calœnas nicobarica* is the same; doubtless Mr. Meade-Waldo, who has bred the latter species pretty freely, could enlighten us as to its method of displaying its charms.

Chalcophaps and *Phaps* are genera of rather sluggish but very beautiful birds, and I am not sure whether what I have seen them do was intended as an attraction or an insult to their wives, but I have seen them approach the hen and lift up the wing farthest from her, so as to expose all the metallic feathers simultaneously: I have seen them do this when sidling up to another dove to give him a smack so that it may not have been intended as an overture of affection, but it was extremely beautiful for all that. (*b*)

The species of *Zenaida*, which are chiefly ornamented on the neck, appear to me to show themselves off like our domestic Pigeons, but I have not studied them intimately enough to be quite sure of my facts yet, though I have had a pair of *Z. auriculata* for twelve months. *Z. aurita* I have only added recently.

By the way, it seems curious that *Zenaida* should be

(*b*) *Phaps chalcoptera* shows off to its mate in much the same way as *Ocyphaps*, namely, by bowing the head, expanding the tail and spreading the wings over the back, thus presenting to the hen a shield of brilliant metallic colours. At the same time the bird sways its body from side to side, balancing its weight first on one leg and then on the other. I have also seen it bow and spread the tail like an English Woodpigeon or the various species of *Geopelia*.—D. S.-S.

regarded as a ground-dove, for my birds never come down excepting to feed ; in which respect they are the exact opposite to *Phlogœnas* which spends the whole day on the earth, only flying up to roost, or when flushed.

REVIEWS.

Song Birds ; a Paper read before the National British Bird and Mule Club, by Mr. Albert Rettich.

Our readers know Mr. Rettich, and they do not need to be told that his writings are always both practical and interesting. The paper now before us the author modestly acknowledges to be largely a translation from a German Avicultural Journal—he is not the only avicultural writer who has borrowed from German sources, and such a course is much to be commended, for German avicultural literature is undoubtedly ahead of our own.

We are surprised at the very high estimation, as a songster, in which the Garden Warbler appears to be held by German aviculturists.

A Mr. Heppe, who seems to be a man of great experience, is quoted as an authority against giving too many mealworms to delicate birds,—"The armour-like skin of the insect, he finds productive of indigestion, of clogging, swelling, and cramp in the feet, and other disorders." He gives fresh ants' eggs in the summer and no mealworms, and but few in the winter.

It is a pity that this interesting paper should be printed in such very small type.

"Lost and Vanishing Birds : Being a Record of some Remarkable Extinct Species and a Plea for some Threatened Forms."
By Charles Dixon.

"One of the saddest features of civilisation is the disappearance of so many beautiful and curious creatures from this world of ours." These words with which Mr. Dixon begins his preface are the key note of an interesting but melancholy book, which deserves to be carefully read by all bird-lovers. It is very saddening to look down the list of "Lost British Birds," "Vanishing British Birds," "Lost Exotic Birds," and "Vanishing Exotic Birds," and to feel how great has been the loss already, and how much greater it is likely to be in the near future.

One little gleam of comfort Mr. Dixon gives us,—

"As a set-off against the many interesting (British) species that we "have lost for ever, it is gratifying to know that the spread of cultivation "and the improvement of waste land, so disastrous to the larger birds, has "favoured the increase and dispersal of considerable numbers of the smaller "species. Many of these latter birds are songsters of varying merit, and "these have followed the horticulturist and the agriculturist, so that many "districts are now made glad with song which formerly were silent. The "boom of the Bittern has died away with the disappearance of marsh and "fen; the song of the Passere is heard in its place. This, in a measure, is "some compensation for our loss. In some districts, however, many of the "smaller birds have been ruthlessly depleted by the gunner and the snarer; "and we can name localities where such species as Goldfinches, Bullfinches, "Hawfinches, Wood Larks, Nuthatches, and Kingfishers are altogether "exterminated or fast becoming so. Certain intelligently-framed Amend- "ments to the Acts for the Preservation of Wild Birds, and the establishment "of proper machinery for the enforcement of the existing law, should "remedy the evil. The wholesale destruction of the nests and eggs of the "smaller birds that goes on in most country districts must have a most "injurious effect upon the species, and is even worse than the destruction "of the birds themselves. Eggs to some extent are now protected, but the "law in most places is utterly ignored."

Mr. Dixon lays little stress upon the alleged depredations of bird-catchers, and we presume that he considers that they are responsible for only a small fraction of the destruction which goes on. This coincides with our own views, for we believe that, with the exception of the Goldfinches, there is scarcely a British species whose numbers have been seriously reduced by the capture of specimens for cage or aviary. We cordially approve of the policy of the Wild Bird Protection Acts, and consider that indiscriminate bird-catching should be prevented—but we firmly believe that few, if any, of our British species are in any danger from bird-catchers alone, and that they are often blamed for what has really been caused by game-keepers, so-called "scientific collectors," the more ignorant among the farmers, and last, but not least, the village hobbledehoys.

Mr. Dixon is disposed to laugh at the outcry often made about the slaughter of some very rare bird which has wandered to our shores, and considers that the killing of such specimens is perfectly justifiable, as the species would never become indigenous, and the solitary wanderer would probably perish from hunger if not shot. This may be all very true in theory, but we cannot agree with it in practice, for the species is seldom identified until after the bird has been killed, and a man with a gun in his hand, on the look out for rare birds, will not stop to consider whether or not the bird at which he is aiming is sufficiently

scarce to justify its slaughter! We feel also bound to enter a protest against the author's astonishing sympathy with the wearing of birds' plumes by ladies.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.

SIR,—The last paragraph in Mr. A. Crafer's letter raises a subject which has given me a lot of thought:—the *wanton* destruction of birds and their eggs. I am afraid no real good will be done until there is a society formed (on similar lines to the R.S.P.C.A.) whose special object shall be to protect the birds and eggs (c). I know some people argue that birds are as plentiful as ever they were; well, they may be in some parts, but I am sorry to say that here in Yorkshire it is not so. I remember when I was a lad seeing Goldfinches flying by the dozen, and hearing my father talk of hundreds, but now, alas, where are they? I have not seen a dozen out of cages in as many years. The last I saw were a pair crossing the road near Scarboro'; and the next day that I went past there was the bird-catcher, call-birds and all. I felt that I would like to give him a ducking in the sea; anyway it would have given him a wash, a thing he very much needed. I am not against keeping birds in captivity, far from it, providing they are caught out of the breeding season and properly cared for, but when I see a dirty, filthy thief, too lazy to work, catching birds to get money to booze, I think it is time that something were done to protect our song birds from extermination. I have no doubt that there are a few respectable bird-catchers here and there, but the best of them are not the kindest of individuals. What do they do with those they cannot sell, hen Linnets, for instance? I once asked one the question, he said: "Oh, we kill them; we cannot be bothered with them." I do not include in my condemnation the working-man who catches a few for his own use—only the seven-days-a-week man.

I am afraid the Wild Birds' Protection Act is dying a natural death; and if something be not done to remedy the existing state of things many of our most desirable birds will be altogether extinct. What is the use of fining a man 7s. 6d. for shooting a bird when he has sold it for £7? No, the Act should be amended so that the bird (or eggs) should be confiscated and go to the public museum in the town or county where taken; and if it could be proved that anyone has bought it, or tried to buy it, he should be fined as well as the man who killed or caught it. This, and nothing less, will stop the wanton destruction that is now going on, and which every right-minded man must deplore. I hope some of our influential members will give this their serious thought, and try and get the Act amended so as to make it more effectual. Then may we hope to see the Goldfinch, Chough, etc., as plentiful as they were forty years ago.

R. CREIGHTON.

(c) Has Mr. Creighton never heard of the "Society for the Protection of Birds," of which Mrs. Lemon, of Hillcrest, Redhill, Surrey, is the Hon. Secretary? It is a large and influential Society, and doing a good work. The Selborne Society also works in the same cause.—ED.

FAMILY CHARACTERS IN BIRDS.

SIR,—A remark in Mr. Perkins' letter in the last number of the Magazine is worth consideration; as it appears that the importance of family characters is somewhat over-estimated by some aviculturists. As a matter of fact families are mere conveniences for the cabinet-naturalist, and are often based upon a single structural peculiarity which alone unites certain very distinct sub-families.

Sub-families of different families may be very closely related in all respects, excepting that which has been seized upon by the systematist as a distinctive family character; whilst sub-families having this character in common, may differ far more in other respects.

In the family *Turdidæ*, the *Turdinæ* are naturally distinguishable from the *Sylviinæ* by their spotted young, a character most important when considering the question of affinity; on the other hand the young of Warblers are not spotted, and it is evident that they are a perfectly separate branch of the Thrush-like stock; indeed their clearly-scaled tarsi distinguish them at once from the *Turdinæ*, in which the front of the foot (popularly known as leg) is quite smooth and undivided until just before the junction with the claws (digits).

The two families *Fringillidæ* and *Ploceidæ* are even more nearly related than most of the bird-families, for they differ chiefly in the relative length of the first primary and its covert; so that, whereas the first primary may be even longer in a genus of typical Finches than in a genus of Weaving-finches, it is not apparent, owing to the greater length of the covert. It is true that the Weaving-finches build cave-like nests, whilst most typical finches build open nests; but the genus *Phonipara* (which has been placed by scientists in the *Fringillidæ*) builds like a Waxbill; whilst the species of *Passer* build purse-shaped nests somewhat approaching in character those of certain Grass-finches.

It seems to me that the mere habit of eating fruit and the notching of the upper mandible to that end, although it may serve as a good family distinction, affords no evidence of long separation in point of time. In the family *Icteridæ* we have both fruit-eaters and seed-eaters,—Hang-nests and Troupials; but I must admit that I believe the Troupials to be indistinguishable from true Starlings (which also eat seed voluntarily when they can get it) unless the fact that they nest on or near the ground, like some of the Buntings, be regarded as sufficiently important to warrant their separation from the hole-breeders.

In like manner I doubt whether the New World Bush-creepers are distinct from the Old World Warblers, the supposed nine-primary distinction between the *Muiotiltidæ* and *Sylviinæ* being a fiction: perhaps some more learned student of ornithology among our members can suggest a reliable family difference between these birds.

ARTHUR G. BUTLER.

THE EASTERN NIGHTINGALE OR SPROSSER.

Erithacus philomela.

SIR,—Will you kindly let me know if there is a bird known by th name of the "Nightingale Thrush"?

In answer to enquiries from a man who has advertised one, he writes, "The Nightingale Thrush is a smaller bird than the ordinary Song Thrush, and considered a superior songster." I want to know if this bird is a distinct species or variety, or whether it is only a small specimen of the Song Thrush, and whether it has a different song from the latter.

C. HARRISON.

The following reply was sent to Mr. Harrison :—

"Nightingale Thrush," or rather "Thrush Nightingale," is an out-of-date name for a bird which is usually called in this country "The Greater Nightingale;" but "Eastern Nightingale" is a better name, our own bird being the Western Nightingale; it is now often known by the handy German name of Sprosser. If you will refer to the lower part of page 33 of the current volume, you will see that this species has already been referred to in our Magazine;—and you will also please observe that it is not every Nightingale which has been "made in Germany" that is a Sprosser. Indeed, I am getting more and more suspicious of the genuineness of these imported specimens. Moreover, it seems to me that those that do come over are mostly females; with this as with other species, the Germans seem to have a way of keeping the best for themselves and of sending the rubbish to this country—to be disposed of at absurd prices.

I have often found it exceedingly difficult to distinguish the Sprosser from our Nightingale. It is true that the breast is sometimes mottled, but then so is that of the Nightingale: I think it is in the spring that the mottling comes out so strongly. In the Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. no mention whatever is made of mottles or spots on the breast of the Sprosser: the account is, "This species differs from the preceding (the Nightingale) in being generally less russet in colour (more olive), especially on the upper tail-coverts, in having a smaller bastard primary, a more pointed wing, and in being a somewhat larger bird." Mr. Howard Saunders specially refers to the "minute bastard primary" as a distinguishing mark. A German writer (Brehm) states that the Sprosser is stouter and about three-fourths of an inch longer than the Nightingale, and that the upper breast is cloudy speckled. The song is stated to be more powerful but less melodious than that of our bird. It is stated by some, even quite recently, that the Sprosser has been occasionally met with in this country; but this is discredited by modern scientists, who have laid down the law that the bird must not appear farther west than the Rhine valley—but birds do not always regard the laws of the learned. The Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. says, "The Eastern Nightingale breeds in Eastern Europe, rarely straying into the valley of the Rhine, extending northwards into South Sweden and Central Russia, and eastwards into Asia Minor, Northern Turkestan, and South-western Siberia. It passes through North-eastern Africa on migration, and doubtless winters somewhere in the interior."

It will be seen from the foregoing that the Thrush Nightingale must not be compared with the British Thrush but with our familiar Nightingale. Even the old scientific name *Philomela turdoides* (Thrush-like Nightingale) has long been discarded along with the English one.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

SNOWY OWLS.

SIR,—It may interest you to hear that a pair of Snowy Owls, which were brought to me from Norway by a friend in 1891, have this summer (for the first time) nested, and now have two fine young ones half grown.

Except the late Mr. E. Fountaine (Norfolk) I do not think anybody has reared young of this Owl to *maturity*: although Mr. Meade-Waldo and the late Lord Lilford had young ones hatched in their collections.

I have reared one young Eider Duck. There were three strong young ones, but two succumbed to the heat one sultry day.

W. H. ST. QUINTIN.

PEKIN ROBINS.

SIR,—Will Dr. Butler kindly tell us what the twenty-four eggs and five or six young ones were, which he alleges his Pekin Robins devoured?(*d*)

My Virginians have again a nest of eggs fully exposed to depredation, and the Pekins never take any notice of them.

C. D. FARRAR.

THE "IDEAL" PARROT.

SIR,—Mr. Dutton is surprised to hear of an Alexandrine being, in any sense, the "ideal" Parrot. I have not his wide experience of Parrots, but as far as my limited knowledge goes, every rule with regard to them seems to bristle with exceptions. I mean, of course, especially with regard to their powers of intelligence as shown by their tameness and acquisition of speech.

"Tony" was a cock bird, a very beautiful specimen of his kind, and in all respects a perfectly unique creature. I trained him to be clean by means of a little stand, fourteen inches high, upon which I used to place him at intervals. He very soon learned to know why he was removed from my shoulder or lap, and it was comical to see him nodding his head when, the object of his removal being accomplished, he was ready to come back. Of course I always watched him when he was on a visitor, and I knew by his movements when he wanted to come away, especially as he never refused to come when it was necessary, although stoutly declining when it was not. But I may mention that, even before this training began, I never once knew him misbehave when sitting on a gentleman, and only once when on a lady.

His extreme tameness was the indirect cause of his death, which was brought about by his being accustomed to eat all sorts of things which were neither natural nor wholesome. He had done so before I had him, and, being ignorant through inexperience, I unfortunately allowed this to continue, and so lost a bird which I would not have parted with for a thousand pounds. A *post-mortem* revealed the cause of death to be in-

---

(*d*) The twenty-four eggs were those of Java Sparrows and Saffron Finches; the young birds were of the latter species. Mr. Farrar need not use the word 'alleges': the fact was repeatedly pointed out to me by my man, and I saw the *Lithrix* enter the nests, bring out both eggs and young and devour them: the nest-boxes were examined every week, so that we knew exactly how many we lost.—A. G. B.

digestion and congestion of the liver. I never expect to see another bird to equal "Tony," and I think that if Mr. Dutton had seen him he would have agreed with me that he was certainly an "ideal" Parrot.

C. L. COLLIER.

PARROT FINCHES.

SIR,—I bought a pair of Parrot Finches in January last, and on the 11th April put them into a waggon-cage to see whether they would breed. This morning (21st May) a broken egg was on the sand-tray. (*e*)

I should not have troubled you with this letter, but when the egg was opened to see whether it was fertile, to my surprise there were two chicks inside, one slightly larger than the other.

For years any number of Zebra Finches bred with me, but never a case of a double-yolked egg. I know fowls occasionally lay them; and a man who kept Canaries in this neighbourhood gave an account in the local paper, about two years ago, of having five birds from four eggs; (*f*) but I cannot recollect any mention made in the Avicultural Magazine of a similar case happening to foreign Birds.

It would be of interest if any of our Members could mention having the like experience, and, if so, whether the birds lived.

W. T. CATLEUGH.

SIR,—This spring I started with four Parrot Finches (sexes doubtful); and several nests were built and eggs laid; but my aviary is far too crowded, and nests and eggs were destroyed by other birds. The Parrot Finches made no attempts to defend their nests, the hen flying off at the approach of any tiny bird; practically their time is given up to fighting amongst themselves and hunting one another all over the aviary. At first the nests were all "independent" nests, built less than four feet from the ground, small, compact, and neat; but all the later nests have been built in boxes and high up. The last nest which I know of (perhaps there is another missing hen now sitting) was in a box just under the centre of the roof of the aviary, in full view; and on the 1st of August the hen flew down close to me with excreta in her bill—which seems strange for a Parrot Finch. Since that date the young from this nest have been in hiding somewhere at the back, and quite out of sight, but often distinctly heard. Yesterday I thought I saw an unusual number of Parrot Finches, and to-day (16th) I saw a flock of five, two being apparently young birds. My Parrot Finches have nested so *very* freely and perseveringly that, under favourable circumstances, there ought not to be any difficulty whatever in breeding them.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

(*e*) From subsequent letters we learn that one young Parrot Finch was hatched by Mr. Catleugh's birds, and lived for about a week. Several of our members are this year trying to breed this charming species. So far Mr. St. Quintin and Mr. Phillipps are the only members of whose success we have heard this season.—ED.

(*f*) Two or three years ago I recorded the fact that I reared two Canaries from one egg.—A. G. B.

NOTES ON THE NESTING OF THE CHINESE QUAIL.

SIR,—I am not aware that any of the "Painted" Quails have been bred in England; I had hoped to be able to record the fact of having bred the common species, *E. chinensis*, myself, but unfortunately one of those slips twixt the cup and lip, which so often happen with aviculturists, has prevented my success, although I now possess, preserved in spirits, some genuine young Chinese Quails, which never lived to break the shell.

A number of eggs were laid by my Quails last winter when they were in an indoor aviary, but besides the time of year being adverse to the rearing of young birds, the aviary was too crowded for any hope of success and no attempt was made to incubate; the eggs being, in fact, laid in different places. In April the Quails were put into an outdoor aviary, and very soon eggs were discovered about the floor, but no attempt at a nest was made. I obtained some thick branches and stacked them against the wall in one corner of the aviary, and behind them I placed a bunch of soft hay. Shortly after this I had to leave home, and upon my return was glad to find that the hay had been formed into a nest, and that the hen was steadily sitting upon *eight* eggs. She sat very well and I quite hoped within three weeks to have a brood of young Chinese Quails, but I was to be disappointed. When the three weeks were up I thought it probable that the eggs lacked sufficient moisture and they were sprinkled with luke-warm water; but I hardly hoped for success now, as I was nearly sure the full time was passed.

The hen would leave the nest when I went to sprinkle the eggs, and immediately I had finished would rush on again long before I left the aviary, a fact that is perhaps worth noting, since it has been stated that the slightest interference with the nest or eggs of this species will cause the birds to desert—still it is in all cases where foreign birds are nesting much better *not* to go near the nest, whatever has been stated to the contrary.

Shortly after the three weeks were up I placed the eggs in warm water and found that they all floated, and no motion was visible as it should have been had the chicks been alive. I thereupon broke one egg and found that it contained a fully developed chick, which had evidently been dead some few days. I then broke all the eight, four of which contained dead young birds, all fully developed, and apparently within about a day of hatching; they were of course covered with down, and closely resembled young partridges in colour.

How it was that none hatched is not clear, but my own opinion is that the fault lies in the concrete floor of the inner part of the aviary, upon which the nest was placed. If I ever put up another outdoor aviary I shall have the bare earth as a floor to the inner as well as the outer part, only I shall have a layer of half-inch mesh wire netting laid about six inches below the surface as a proof against ground vermin. My Chinese Quails are particularly tame, and will readily take mealworms from the hands of those they know. The hen occasionally "crows" as well as the cock, but in a feebler voice.

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(Continued from page 2 of cover).

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Miss ASHFORD, The Birks, Bournemouth.

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Miss HUSBAND, Clifton View, York.

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Mrs. John Frostick, 126, Ramsden Road, Balham, S.W.
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Notices to Members:

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at once communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to members of the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the Council who will answer them.

The Magazine is published by Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Limited, of 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., and is dispatched by them monthly to the members. Orders for extra copies, back numbers, and bound volumes should be addressed to them and not to the Secretary.

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THE SOCIETY'S MEDAL.

☞ IMPORTANT NOTICE.—It is believed that Mr. MEADE-WALDO and the Rev. C. D. FARRAR have both become entitled to medals—the one for breeding the Chinese Quail (*Excalfactoria chinensis*) and the other for breeding the African Fire-finch (*Lagonosticta minima*)—but before actually awarding them the Executive Committee wish to afford the members an opportunity of bringing to their notice any previous instance of the successful breeding in this country of either of the species in question.

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ADAMSON, Miss, Rushton Park, Battle, Sussex. (May, 1897).

AGGS, Mr. H. GURNEY, Pipphrook, Dorking. (Oct., 1897).

AINLEY, Mr. JOHN WILLIAM, 16, Dalton Green, Dalton, Huddersfield. (June, 1895). *

ALDERSON, Miss R., Park House, Worksop. (April, 1896).

ALLBUTT, Mrs., 24, Park Square, Leeds. (Jan., 1897).

APPLEFORD, Mrs., West Hill House, Hoddesdon, Herts. (March, 1897).

ARTHUR, Mr. C. P., Market Place, Melksham. (Jan., 1895). *

ASHFORD, Miss GRACE, The Birks, Branksome Wood Road, Bournemouth. (Nov., 1896).

ASTLEY, Rev. H. D., M.A., F.Z.S., Cheker's Court, Butler's Cross S.O., Bucks. (June, 1895). *

AUSTEN, Mr. ERNEST E., 104, Minet Avenue, Harlesden, N.W. (Orig. Mem.)

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BERKELEY, The Baroness, Martin's Heron, Bracknell, Berks. (Dec., 1894).

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CARPMAEL, Miss, The Ivies, St. Julian's Farm Road, West Norwood. (April, 1896).
CARRICK, Mr. GEORGE, Strathearn Cottage, Saltcoats, Ayrshire, N.B. (March, 1898).
CARTER, Mr. WALTER L., Summergate Villa, Parkinson Lane, Halifax. (June, 1895). *
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CATLEUGH, Mr. W. T., Donnington Road, Newbury, Berks. (Dec., 1894).
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CHAMBERLAIN, Mrs. D'EYNCOURT, Twynham, Christchurch Road, Bournemouth. (Feb., 1897).
CHAPMAN, Mr. P. GODFREY, Congham House, King's Lynn. (Oct., 1898).
CHARRINGTON, Mrs. MOWBRAY, The Warren, Hever, Edenbridge, Kent. (May, 1896).
CLARKE, Mrs. CHARLES, National Training School of Cookery, 72-78, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W. (Dec., 1894).
COCKSEDGE, Mr. E. LE HOUP, Beyton Grange, Suffolk. (March, 1898).
COLLIER, Miss CONSTANCE L., 210, Adelaide Road, South Hampstead. N.W. (April, 1898).
COMYNS, Mr. J. H., B.A., Oxon., Lyveden, Newton Abbot, South Devon. (Jan., 1897).
CONNELL, Mrs. A. KNATCHBULL, The Hermitage, Godalming. (Nov., 1897).
COOK, Mr. FRANK, Sunny Mount, Lincoln. (Feb., 1867).
COOPER, Mr. JAMES, Killerby Hall, Scarborough. (Orig. Mem.)
COX, Mr. G. H., 42, London Road, Leicester. (Oct., 1898).
CRAFER, Mr. ALFRED, 6, Dyke Road, Brighton. (Dec., 1894).
CREE, Miss E. J., Ingleside, Lenzie, Glasgow. (Jan., 1895).
CREIGHTON, Mr. R., Likoma House, Belle Vue Street, Filey. (Sept. 1897).
CRESSWELL, Mr. O. E., J.P., Morney Cross, near Hereford. (Orig. Mem.)
CRONKSHAW, Mr. J., 85, Plantation Street, Accrington. (Dec., 1894).

CUMMINGS, Mr. ALEXANDER, 16, Promenade Villas, Cheltenham. (Dec., 1896).
CUSHNY, Mr. CHARLES, Pain's Hill, Cobham, Surrey. (June, 1896).

DALE, Dr. F., Park Lee, Scarborough. (Dec., 1894). *
DALY, Mr. EDWARD D. H., (late Lieut., Bengal Staff Corps), Cavell's Cottage, The Purlieu, Hythe, Southampton. (Dec., 1895).
DEVAS, Mr. GEORGE, Hartfield, Hayes, Kent. (Oct., 1898).
DEWAR, Mr. J. F., 2, St. Patrick's Square, Edinburgh. (Orig. Mem.) *
DINGWELL, Mrs., Knollys Croft, Leigham Court Road, Streatham, S. W. (August, 1898).
DOHERTY, Mr. JOHN, 6, Broomwood Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W. (June, 1896).
DUNCOMBE, The Hon. Mrs., The Grange, Nawton R. S. O., Yorks. (April, 1897).
DUNLEATH, The Lady, Ballywalter Park, Ballywalter, co. Down. (Aug., 1897).
DUTTON, The Hon. and Rev. F. G., Bibury, Fairford. (Orig. Mem.)
DYSON, Miss F., 3, Donnington Villas, Newbury, Berks. (Feb., 1898).

EDWARDS, Miss K., 140, Lower Addiscombe Road, Croydon. (March, 1898).
EDWARDS, Mr. WILLIAM, Abergele Road, Colwyn Bay, North Wales. (March, 1898).

FARMBOROUGH, Mr. PERCY W., F.Z.S., The Public Library, Edmonton. (June, 1896). *
FARRAR, The Rev. C. D., Micklefield Vicarage, South Milford, Yorks. (Jan., 1895).
FARRAR, Mr. H. CRAWHALL, Bourn Terrace, Hartlepool. (Jan., 1895).
FIFE, Mrs., Langton Hall, Northallerton. (Oct., 1898).
FILLMER, Mr. H. R., Brendon, Harrington Road, Brighton. (Orig. Mem.) *
FILLMER, Mrs. W., Woodside, Harrington Road, Brighton. (Orig. Mem.)
FINN, Mr. F., B.A., F.Z.S., Indian Museum, Calcutta. (March, 1895).
FISHER, The Rev. WILFRED, Parklands, Lustleigh, Newton Abbot. (Dec., 1894).
FLINT, Mr. J. L., 9, Donnington Square, Newbury. (Feb., 1897).
FOWLER, Mr. CHARLES, 26, Broad Street, Blaenavon. (Dec., 1894).
FOX, Mr. C. J., 35, Addington Street, Ramsgate, Kent. (May, 1897).
FRANCIS, Mrs., The Manor House, Richmond, S.W. (June, 1896).
FRANKLIN-HINDLE, Mr. R., 13, Regent Road, Birkdale, Southport. (Sept. 1898).
FROSTICK, Mr. JOHN, 126, Ramsden Road, Balham, S.W. (Orig. Mem.) *
FULLJAMES, Mr. HENRY J., Brooklyn, Elmbourne Road, Bedford Hill, Balham, S.W. (April, 1895).

GABRIEL, Mrs. G., 32, Palace Road, Streatham Hill. (June, 1895).
GIBBINS, Mr. WILLIAM B., Ettington, Stratford-on-Avon. (June, 1895). *
GIBBINS, Mr. FREDK. W., Neath, South Wales. (Oct., 1897).
GIBSON, The Rev. THOMAS B., A.M., The Rectory, Ferns, co. Wexford. (Feb., 1896).
GILLETT, Miss A. K., Duffield Bank House, Derby. (Nov., 1897).
GOODFELLOW, Mr. WALTER, 13, Brunswick Square, London, W. C. (June, 1897).

GRACE, Mr. GUSTAVE LE CARPENTIER, 24, Wood Street, Wakefield. (March, 1896).
GREEN, Mr. ALBERT, 4, Cumnor Terrace, Bournemouth. (Feb., 1898).
GRIFFITHS, Mr. E., Brislington House, Bristol. (Orig. Mem.)
GRIGGS, Dr. W. A., 77 and 79, High Cross Street, Leicester. (Oct. 1898).

HAMILTON, Mrs., Bannerdown House, Batheaston, Bath. (Feb., 1895).
HAMMOND, Mrs. W. A., 2, Eaton Gardens, Hove. (Orig. Mem).
HARBOTTLE, Miss, Meadowside, Victoria Place, Budleigh Salterton, Devon. (Dec., 1895).
HARDINGE, The Hon. Lady, Le Petite Maison, Costie-Belle, Hyères, Var, France. (Nov., 1896).
HARKER, Mr. T. P., Tichfield, Clermont Terrace, Preston, near Brighton. (Orig. Mem).
HARRISON, Mr. C. L., Woodhayne, Honiton, Devon. (May, 1895).
HARRISON, Miss EDITH, Waterhouse, Bath. (Sept., 1895).
HARTLEY, Mrs., St. Helen's Lodge, Hastings. (April, 1897).
HENWOOD, Mr. T. E., Auricula Villa, Hamilton Road, Reading. (Dec., 1894).
HETT, Mr. CHARLES LOUIS, Springfield, Brigg. (Jan., 1896).
HITCHINS, Mr. MARTIN F., Trevarrick, St. Austell. (Jan., 1897).
HODGSON, Miss, Hernewood, Sevenoaks. (Dec., 1894). *
HOPE, Colonel C. E., Hillside, Shanklin, Isle of Wight. (May, 1897).
HOPSON, Mr. F. C., Northbrook Street, Newbury. (March, 1897).
HORSBRUGH, Lieutenant B., Army Service Corps, Sierra Leone, W. Africa. (Jan., 1898).
HOULTON, Mr. CHARLES, Denton's Green Lane, St. Helen's. (Feb., 1897).
HOUSDEN, Mr. J. B., Brooklyn, Cator Road, Sydenham. (Orig. Mem.)
HOWMAN, Miss, 78, Westow Hill, Upper Norwood. (March, 1897).
HUDSON, Mr. A. F., 3, Hove Place, Hove. (Orig. Mem.)
HUGHES, Mrs., 1, Merton Terrace, Brighton Road, Worthing. (April, 1895).
HUGHES, Mr. FRANK P., 5, Museum Street, Leicester. (Sept. 1898).
HUMPHRYS, Mr. RUSSELL, Lingdale, Bickley, Kent. (April, 1896).
HUSBAND, Miss, Clifton View, York. (Feb., 1896).
HUTT, Mr. HENRY T., 24, Cockspur Street, London, S.W. (Nov., 1896).

JACKSON, Mrs. JAMES, Danecourt, Parkstone, Dorset. (Orig. Mem.)
JENNISON, Mr. GEORGE, Devonport Park, Stockport. (Sept., 1897).
JONES, Mr. NORMAN H., Glasmoor, Victoria Road, Bridlington Quay. (Orig. Mem.) *
JONES, Mr. ARTHUR, 85, Sidney Road, Homerton. (June, 1895).

KING, Mr. J. B., Annandale House, Glebe, Kilmarnock. (Oct., 1896).
KEENE, Mrs., 39, Hough Green, Chester. (Feb., 1897).
KNEEN, Mr. T. E., 92, Harrington Road, Workington. (June, 1895). *

LAMB, Mrs. R. O., West Denton, Scotswood-on-Tyne. (March, 1898).
LANCASTER, Mrs., Burnside, Walsall. (August, 1897).
LANDLESS, Mr. W., Portland Villa, Waterloo Road, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston. (Dec., 1896).
LASCELLES, The Hon. GERALD W., Queen's House, Lyndhurst. (Oct., 1896).
LAW, Mr. EVELYN C., Kingswear, Fairfax Road, Teddington, Middlesex. (Dec., 1897).

LAWRENCE, Mr. J. I., Fanciers' Publishing Co., Worcester, Mass., U.S.A. (Oct., 1897).
LAWSON, Dr. H., The Homestead, Chislehurst Hill, Kent. (Aug., 1896).
LEADBEATER, Mr. F. W., 215, London Road, Sheffield. (Dec., 1894).
LEADBETTER, Mr. RICHARD, 21, Trinity Road, Penge. (Dec., 1894).
LEGH DE LEGH, Dr. H., Redcar, Yorks. (March, 1896).
LENNIE, Mr. JOSEPH C., Rose Park, Trinity Road, Edinburgh. (Orig. Mem.) *
LILFORD, The Lady, Lilford Hall, Oundle, Northamptonshire. (Jan., 1898).
LLEWELYN, Miss, 188, Earl's Court Road, London, S.W. (Orig. Mem.) *
LONG, Mrs. HUME, Dolforgan, Exmouth. (June, 1895).
LONG, Miss MURIEL M. L., Woodhouse, Chudleigh, S. Devon. (Feb., 1895).
LOTT, Mr. W. A., 8, Lansdowne Road, Stockwell. (Oct., 1895).
LOW, Mrs., Kilshane, Tipperary, Ireland. (Feb. 1895).
LYDON, Mr. A. F., 11, Woodstock Road, Bedford Park, Chiswick. (June, 1895).
LYNCH, Mr. CYRIL, 45, Rua Dr. Corréa, Cattete, Rio de Janiero, Brazil. (April, 1897).
LYON, Lieut-Col. F. L. H., R.A., J.P., Harwood, Horsham. (Nov., 1894).

MACGAVIN, Dr. JOHN, Trafalgar House, Trafalgar Road, Greenwich. (June, 1898).
MARSH, Mrs., 49, Sackville Road, Hove. (Dec., 1894).
MARSHALL, Mr. THOMAS, The Grange, 128, High Street, Poplar, E. (Dec., 1894).
MARTIN, Mr. H. C., 16, Victoria Road, Old Charlton, S.E. (Jan., 1897).
MAXWELL, Mr. C. T., South Lawn, 24, Acre Lane, Brixton, S.W. (Mar., 1896).
MCCORQUODALE, Mrs., Gadlys, Llansadwrn, Isle of Anglesey. (May, 1898).
MEADE-WALDO, Mr. E. G. B., Stonewall Park, Edenbridge, Kent. (Jan., 1895).
MICHELL, Mrs., Crakehall, Bedale, Yorkshire. (Sept., 1898).
MOERSCHELL, Mr. F., Imperial Hotel, Malvern. (June, 1895).
MORSHEAD, Lady, Forest Lodge, Binfield, Bracknell, Berks. (Dec., 1894). *
MORTIMER, Mrs., Wigmore, Holmwood, Surrey. (Orig. Mem.) *
MURGATROYD, Mr. J. W., Ash Brook, Heaton, Bradford. (May, 1896).

NICHOLSON, Mr. ALFRED E., 52, Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh. (Oct., 1896) *
NICHOLSON, Mr. W., 67, High West Street, Gateshead. (Feb., 1898).

OAKEY, Mr. W., 46, High Street, Leicester,. (March, 1896). *
OATES, Mr. F. W., White House Farm, New Leeds, Leeds. (Oct., 1897).
O'BRIEN, The Hon. Mrs., Moor Park, Ludlow. (Nov., 1897).
OLIVER, Dr. G. H., Station Road, Clayton, Bradford. (Feb., 1897).
O'REILLY, Mr. NICHOLAS S., 9, Royal Crescent, Ramsgate, Kent. (Dec., 1894).
OSBALDESTON, Mr. W., 2, St. John Street, Preston, Lancashire. (June, 1895). *
OWEN, Mr. J. A., 41, King's Road, Brighton. (April, 1895).

PAGE, Mr. WESLEY T., 6, Rylett Crescent, Shepherd's Bush, London, W. (May, 1897).

PEARSON, Mr. A. A., 95, Victoria Road, Headingley, Leeds. (Nov., 1897).
PERKINS, Mr. SEPTIMUS, Woodford House, Queen's Park Road, Brighton. (Orig. Mem.)
PERRING, Mr. C. S. R., 144A, Queen Victoria Street, London, E. C. (Sept., 1895).
PHILLIPPS, Mr. R., 26, Cromwell Grove, West Kensington Park, London, W. (Orig. Mem.) *
PHILLIPPS, Mrs. R., 26, Cromwell, Grove, West Kensington Park, London, W. (Orig. Mem.)
PHILLIPPS, Mr. ALEXANDER T. L., Port Said, Egypt. (Dec., 1894).
PHILLPOTTS, Miss CONSTANCE, Elmhurst, Canterbury. (Feb., 1897).
PITT, Dr. G. NEWTON, 15, Portland Place, W. (Dec., 1894).
PITT, Mrs., The Nest, Torquay. (Dec., 1894).
PLOMLEY, Dr. J. F., Knightrider House, Maidstone. (Feb., 1898).
POOL, Mr. J. C., Carr's Lane, Birmingham. (Orig. Mem.)
POYSER, Mr. EDWIN J., F.Z.S., Dunburgh House, Geldeston, Beccles. (Aug., 1897).

RAILTON, Mr. R. J., Brampton House, Longley Road, Tooting. (April 1897).
REAY, Mr. JOHN HENRY ALFRED, 7, Rosemont, Wallington, Surrey. (April, 1898).
REED, Mrs., Funchal, Madeira. (Feb., 1895).
REID, Mr. WILLIAM, 26, Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh. (Dec., 1894).
RENANT, Mr. W. E., The Brambles, Elmbourne Road, Tooting Common, S.W. (April, 1897).
RETTICH, Mr. A., 10, Northanger Road, Streatham Common, S. W. (July, 1895).
RICHARD, Mr. E., Hotel Metropole, Brighton. (Orig. Mem.) *
ROBERTS, Mr. NORMAN B., Ashdell Cottage, Sheffield. (Feb., 1898).
ROBINSON, Miss H. M., The Newlands, Leamington Spa. (Orig. Mem.)
ROGERS, Miss G. COXWELL, Park Gate, Cheltenham. (Dec., 1895).
ROTCH, Mr. CLAUDE D., 3, Beach Lawn, Waterloo, near Liverpool. (June, 1897).
ROTHERA, Mr. C. L., B. A., Hazlewood, Forest Grove, Nottingham. (July, 1895).
ROWE, Lady, Bridge Hall Farm, Burgess Hill, Sussex. (Dec., 1895).

SALT, Dr. E. G., 50, George Square, Edinburgh. (July, 1895).
SAVAGE, Mr. A., 3, Rue Bihorel, Bihorel, Rouen, Seine Inférieure, France. (April, 1895).
SAVEGE, Dr. GEORGE, 24, Railway Street, Beverley. (Oct., 1896).
SCRIVENS, Miss, Millfield, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex. (July, 1895).
SEAMAN, Mrs., 30, Elvaston Place, Queen's Gate, S.W. (May, 1897).
SECRETARY, The, Natural History Society, Rugby School, Rugby. (Orig. Mem.)
SERGEANT, Mr. J., 10, London Street, Southport. (Orig. Mem.) *
SETH-SMITH, Mr. DAVID, Wilford House, 22, Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone. (Dec., 1894).
SHARP, Miss, M.D., Spring Gardens, Ringwood, Hants. (Orig. Mem.)
SHERBROOKE, Mrs. K., Keldholme Priory, Kirkbymoorside, Yorkshire. (March, 1897).
SIMPSON, Dr. C. S., 2, Portland Road, Hove. (Orig. Mem.) *

SIVEWRIGHT, Miss H. A., The Rise, Headington Hill, Oxford. (Dec., 1895).
SLATER, Mr. ARTHUR A., Windleshaw House, St. Helen's. (Nov., 1894).
SMART, Mr. JOHN, 12, Royal Crescent, Edinburgh. (Nov., 1894).
SMITH, Mr. H. B., Grangefield, Park Road South, Birkenhead. (June, 1895).*
SMITH, Mr. A. C., Broad Street, Bungay. (Feb., 1896). *
SMITH, Mr. E. E., 133, Alderson Road, Sheffield. (Oct., 1898).
SPEED, Mr. CHARLES, 42, Garth Road, Bangor. (Dec., 1894).
ST. QUINTIN, Mr. W. H., Scampston Hall, Rillington, York. (Orig. Mem.)
STAINES, Mr. E. P., 112, Woodbine Grove, Penge. (May, 1897).
STANSFELD, Mr. JOHN, Dunninald, Montrose, N.B. (Dec., 1896).
STANYFORTH, Mrs., Kirk Hammerton Hall, York. (Nov., 1897).
STORY, Mr. J., 7, Blenheim Terrace, St. John's Wood, N.W. (Orig. Mem.)*
STURTON-JOHNSON, Miss, Ortava House, Ore, Hastings. (May, 1897).
SWAILES, Mr. GEORGE C., Beverley, Yorkshire. (June, 1895).
SWAYSLAND, Mr. WALTER, 184, Western Road, Brighton. (Orig. Mem.) *
SWINFEN-BROUN, Mrs. LAURA, Swinfen Hall, Lichfield. (Feb., 1898).

TATE, Mr. ALAN, 229, Allen Street, Sheffield. (June, 1897).
TAYLOR, Mr. E., 22, Thornton's Arcade, Leeds. (June, 1895). *
THOM, Mr. A. A., Birkacre House, Birkacre, near Chorley. (June, 1895). *
THOMAS, Mr. HENRY, 78, Harlow Terrace, Harrogate. (Jan., 1895).
THOMASSET, Mr. BERNARD C., West Wickham, by Beckenham, Kent. (July, 1896).
THOMPSON, Mr. ARTHUR H., St. Medard's, Darlington. (May, 1895).
THOMPSON, Mrs. WALDEGRAVE, St. Brélade's, Rivercourt Road, Hammersmith, W. (Dec., 1895).
THOYTS, Miss E. E., Sulhampstead Park, Berkshire. (Nov., 1894). *
THURSBY, Mrs., Bank Hall, Burnley. (June, 1895). *
TINNE, Mrs. J. C., Bashleigh Lodge, Lymington, Hants. (Sept. 1898).
TODD, Mr. R. A., Honeyden, Foot's Cray, Kent. (June, 1895).
TOPHAM, Mr. WILLIAM, The Hill, Spondon, Derby. (Feb., 1895). *
TOWNEND, Mr. FRANK H., 26, Dornton Road, South Croydon, Surrey. (May, 1895). *
TOWNSEND, Mr. STANLEY M., 80, Chesilton Road, Fulham, S.W. (Sept. 1898).
TREVOR-BATTYE, Mr. AUBYN, 2, Whitehall Gardens, Westminster. (July, 1898).
TURNER, Mr. THOMAS, J.P., Cullompton, Devon. (Dec., 1895).

VERRALL, Mr. CLAUDE H., Johannesburg, Streatham Common, S.W. (May, 1897).

WARD, The Hon. Mrs. SOMERSET, Isle o' Valla House, Downpatrick, Ireland. (August, 1897).
WADHAM, Mr. PERCY, 30, Holyrood Street, Newport, Isle of Wight. (April, 1898).
WALKER, Miss H. K. O., Chesham, Bury, Lancashire. (Feb., 1895).
WALKER, Mrs. ARTHUR, 48, Cranley Gardens, South Kensington, S.W. (April, 1898).
WEBB, Mr. ARTHUR W., Primrose Club, Park Place, St. James's, London, W. (March, 1896).
WELLS, Mr. H., Colon, Chapel Road, Worthing. (Nov., 1896).

WEST, Miss E. E., The Homestead, Hawthorne Road, Bickley Park, Kent. (April, 1898). *
WHYTEHEAD, Mr. GODFREE Y., 6, Bootham Terrace, York. (April, 1897).
WHYTEHEAD, Mr. T. B., Acombe House, York. (April, 1897).
WIENER, Mr. AUG. F., 2, Upper Bedford Place, Russell Square, W.C. (July, 1896).
WILDE, Miss, Little Gaddesden, Berkhampstead. (Dec., 1896).
WILKINSON, Miss BEATRICE, End Cliffe, Manor Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. (Dec., 1894).
WILLIAMS, Mr. HOWARD, 4, Highbury Grove, London, N. (April, 1895).
WILLIAMS, Mrs. LESLIE, S. George Street, Bathwick, Bath. (June, 1895).
WILLIAMS, Dr. J. D., 93, Newport Road, Cardiff. (Feb., 1897).
WILLIAMSON, Mrs. D., Merrow Dene, Epsom Road, Guildford. (August, 1898).
WINCHILSEA and NOTTINGHAM, The Dowager Countess of, 6, Bedford Square, London, W.C. (May, 1895).
WORDSWORTH, Miss A. M., 149, King Richard's Road, Leicester. (April, 1895).
WRIGHT, Mrs. G. J., 3, Rose Villas, Picton Road, Ramsgate. (Feb., 1898).

DECEASED MEMBERS.

1894.

Lady MACDONALD. (Orig. Mem.)

1895.

Mr. H. HOLLOWAY. (July, 1895).

1896.

Mr. ROBERT DASHWOOD. (Orig. Mem.) *
Mr. H. C. GREAME. (June, 1895).
The Hon. MARIQUITA MILLES. (Dec., 1894).

1897.

Mr. HENRY ERSKINE ALLON, M.A. (Feb., 1896).
Mr. WILLIAM THOMPSON. (May, 1897).

1898.

Mr. E. G. HALLAM. (June, 1895).
Mr. D. MEINERTZHAGEN. (Dec., 1896).

RULES OF THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

1.—The name of the Society shall be "THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY," and its object shall be the study of Foreign and British Birds. Poultry, Pigeons and Canaries shall be outside the scope of the Society.

2.—The officers of the Society shall be elected annually by the members in manner hereinafter provided, and shall consist of a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, an Auditor, a Scrutineer and a Council of twelve members. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be *ex officio* members of the Council.

3.—Each member shall pay an annual subscription of 7/6, to be due and payable in advance on the 1st of November in each year. New members shall pay an entrance fee of 2/6. Any member whose subscription or entrance fee shall be four months overdue shall cease to be a member of the Society, and notice of his having ceased to be a member, and of the cause, shall be inserted in the Magazine.

4.—New members shall be proposed in writing; and the name and address of every person thus proposed, with the name of the member proposing him, shall be published in the next issue of the Magazine. Unless the candidate shall, within two weeks after the publication of his name in the Magazine, be objected to by at least two members, he shall be deemed to be duly elected. If five members shall lodge with the Secretary objections to any candidate he shall not be elected, but the signatures to the signed objections must be verified by the Scrutineer. If two or more members (but less than five) shall object to any candidate, the Secretary shall announce in the next number of the Magazine that such objections have been lodged (but shall not disclose the names of the objectors), and shall request the members to vote upon the question of the election of such candidate. Members shall record their votes in sealed letters addressed to the Scrutineer, and a candidate shall not be elected unless two-thirds of the votes recorded be in his favour; nor shall a candidate be elected if five or more votes be recorded against his election.

5.—The Magazine of the Society shall be issued on the first day of every month, and forwarded, post free, to each member. The Secretary shall have an absolute discretion as to what matter shall be published in the Magazine (subject to the control of the Council). The Secretary shall refer all matters of doubt or difficulty to the Council. The decision of the majority of the Council shall be final and conclusive in all matters.

6.—The election of officers shall take place every year between the 1st and 14th of October. All candidates must be proposed by one member and seconded by another member (in writing) before they shall be eligible for election; but this shall not apply to officers willing to stand for re-election to the same office. All such proposals which have been duly seconded must be sent to the Secretary before the 14th of September. The Secretary shall prepare a voting paper containing a list of the candidates, showing the offices for which they are respectively seeking election or re-election, and shall send a copy of such voting paper to each member of the Society with the October number of the Magazine. Each member shall make a cross (X) opposite the names of those for whom he desires to vote,

and shall sign the voting paper at the foot, and send it to the Scrutineer in a sealed envelope, before the 14th of October. The Scrutineer shall prepare a written return of the officers elected, showing the number of the votes recorded for each candidate, and send it to the Secretary before the 21st of October, for publication in the November number of the Magazine. In the event of an equality of votes, the President shall have a casting vote.

7.—It shall be lawful for the Council to delegate any of their powers to a Committe of not less than three.

8.—The Council (but not a Committee of the Council) shall have power to alter and add to the Rules, from time to time, in any manner they may think fit.

9.—The Council shall have power to expel any member from the Society at any time, without assigning any reason.

10.—All members intending to resign their membership at the end of the current year of the Society shall give notice of their intention to the Secretary before the 14th October, and all members who do not so give notice shall continue to be members for the year following, and shall be liable for their subscriptions accordingly.

11.—Neither the office of Scrutineer nor the office of Auditor shall be held for two consecutive years by the same person.

12.—The Scrutineer shall not reveal to any person how any member shall have voted.

13.—If any office shall become vacant at any time, other than at the end of the Society's year, the Council shall have power to nominate any member of the Society to fill the vacancy until the expiration of the then current year.

THE SOCIETY'S MEDAL.

The Medal is awarded to every member who succeeds in breeding any species of bird which has not previously been known to breed in captivity in this country. Any member wishing to obtain the Medal must send a detailed account to the Secretary within eight weeks from the date of hatching of the young, and furnish such evidence of the facts as the Executive Committee may require. The Medal will be awarded only in cases where the young shall live to be old enough to feed themselves, and to be independent of their parents. The decision of the Committee shall be final.

The Medal is struck in bronze, and measures 2½ inches in diameter. It bears on the obverse a representation of two birds with a nest containing eggs, and the words "The Avicultural Society—Founded 1894." On the reverse is the following inscription: "Awarded to *(name of donee)* for rearing of young of *(name of species)* a species not previously bred in captivity in the United Kingdom."

Members to whom Medals have been Awarded.

Mr. R. A. Todd, for breeding *Poephila acuticauda* in 1897.

Mr. George E. Bouskill, for breeding *Cyanorhamphus auriceps* in 1897.

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR 1897-8.

Receipts.

	£	s.	d.
Balance from last year	2	17	10
283 Members' Subscriptions at 5/- ..	70	15	0
51 Entrance Fees at 2/6	6	7	6
Special Subscriptions for Hand-coloured Plates	30	11	3
Trade Advertisements	6	17	6
Members' Advertisements	3	3	9
Arrears of Subscriptions and Entrance Fees from last year	0	15	0
Donation by a Member	0	2	6
Sales by Publishers (including cases for binding) less their commission ..	14	15	11
	£136	6	3

Expenditure.

	£	s.	d.
Subscriptions and Entrance fees in arrear	1	5	0
Printing Magazines	57	9	9
Stationery and Miscellaneous Printing (including Envelopes for Magazines and Strawboard)	7	16	6
Cases for Binding and Binding Stock Copies	3	9	0
Cost of Illustrations in Magazine.. ..	35	1	6
Carriage of Magazines by rail to Publishers, &c.	1	2	0
Publishers' fee for addressing and dispatching Magazines to Members	1	10	0
Cost of Medals (including die)	10	5	6
Postage of Magazines	11	14	11
Postage (Secretary and Executive Committee)	6	0	6
Sundries	0	3	0
Purchase of copies of Magazine for January and February, 1898..	0	4	0
Balance carried forward to next year ..	0	4	7
	£136	6	3

O. ERNEST CRESSWELL, *Treasurer.*

Examined with Vouchers and found correct.

JOHN SERGEANT, *Auditor.*

THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

L. V.—No. 49. *All rights reserved.* NOVEMBER, 1898.

BREEDING OF THE CHINESE PAINTED QUAIL.

Excalfactoria chinensis.

By E. G. B. MEADE-WALDO.

The interesting letter of Mr. Seth-Smith, describing the nesting of his Chinese Quails, induces me to record the successful rearing of a bevy of these charming little birds in one of my aviaries this summer.

The cock bird is a very old one, and has wintered out for several years (including the bitter winter of 1895), in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The hen was kindly presented to me this spring, by Mr. Reginald Phillipps. When placed together, the little birds paired at once: the cock holding any little tit-bit in his beak, with his head held on one side, uttering a low crooning sound until the hen ran up and took it from him.

A nest was scratched in the turf, and the first egg laid on June 12th; twenty-one eggs were laid by July 3rd, on which day the hen commenced to sit. As the number of eggs seemed so disproportionate to the size of the bird, I removed ten, leaving eleven in the nest. The hen made up the nest by drawing in grass stems, and the like, but no feathers at all were added, as is the case with all the true Partridges, Pheasants, etc. The hen sat exceedingly well, the cock occasionally sitting by her side but never on the eggs.

On July 23rd the hen came off with seven young ones, leaving one dead in the nest. These little birds were most marvellously active and independent, being able to run quite as fast as the parents on the day of hatching. They were, of course, very small indeed, but still they looked far too large for the eggs they had just come out of. They were dark chocolate in colour, with two broad dull yellow lines down the back, and three yellow stripes on the head. They fed principally on ants' eggs—part of an ants' nest being supplied in a tray twice a-day;

they also ate the ants themselves. From the first, however, th would eat mawseed, also the seeds of various weeds. Th growth was most wonderfully rapid, as will be seen by following dates:

Hatched on July 23rd; August 5th, full fledged, able t well; August 13th, the two young cocks easily distinguis from the hens; August 20th, full grown and almost f plumage; August 27th, young cocks in full plumage, in tinguishable from the parent, and *crowing and calling the hens feed*.

The precocity of these little birds was most remarkable especially in gallinaceous birds, where the assumption of full plumage (especially where the males differ greatly in plumage from the females) is usually a very lengthy process, spread at least over some months; in this bird at five weeks old they were apparently adult.

A prettier sight than this little family are now can hardly be imagined. To escape the burning sun of the last few weeks they have made little runs all through the grass of their lawn, like those made by colonies of field voles. They have little seats under tufts of grass, and in looking at the grass nothing whatever is visible. Suddenly a little head pokes up through the grass and crows; then another and another peer out in different places, and answer; then they all settle down again, having assured one another that they are all there. Occasionally two sit in the same little form, but usually only one.

I forgot to describe the eggs, which were yellowish stone colour, covered with small spots and dots of very dark brown. The eggs were large for the size of the bird.

BREEDING VIRGINIAN CARDINALS.

I.

By the Rev. C. D. Farrar.

Virginian Cardinals are probably familiar to almost all the readers of the *Avicultural Magazine*. In almost every bird shop, at a certain season of the year, you may see one or two unhappy cocks of this species, looking extremely sick and sorry.

In buying Virginian Cardinals let me give a word of caution: Buy them as soon after they arrive as possible, as a very short stay in a dealer's cage will be fatal, for there the seeds of consumption will be laid which will sooner or later end the career of your purchase.

When once acclimatised, Virginians are hardy enough, and will stand all weathers with perfect impunity, except fog; but I have always found newly-come-over specimens exceedingly delicate. Indeed, I should be ashamed to say how many I have lost in acclimatising my present pair. But then, it doesn't do to speak of losses!

I see that people often complain that they cannot keep their Cardinals in colour. I fancy that the reason is 'wrong feeding.' Hempseed is usually recommended, and if used freely I believe it will turn any bird nearly black. I know it will Bullfinches—a 'black' Bullfinch is simply a bird that has been fed on hemp. My Cardinals never have hemp; they have canary, millet and live food *ad libitum*: and the cock is the most glorious colour you ever saw; a perfect blaze of scarlet.

When newly imported, Virginians are usually badly plucked about, and deficient in wings and tail. I always pull out all the broken stumps, and cage the birds until the new feathers are come. This takes about six weeks.

My birds are out of doors all the year round in a big garden aviary, among all sorts and conditions of birds; and though there are nests and young all round them, the Cardinals maintain the path of virtue; in fact they are the most inoffensive birds I know of.

Last year I came pretty near to success; but just as the nest was finished, the hen got a tumour on her breast and I had to kill her. I soon got a new hen, but the season had gone by.

This year the Cardinals began pretty early with nesting operations. The cock came into song about March, and soon after the hen began to carry about sticks and straws, but seemed unable to find a place to her mind, and went and laid three eggs on the bare ground. These are very small for the size of the bird, and exactly like the egg of the common House Sparrow. I was rather sickened over this, and thought I was to have no luck; the more so as having the choice of two nests in the garden to put them in—a Chaffinch's and a Robin's—I selected the Robin's, as I thought it most hidden, and of course I chose the wrong one; for the next day some young calves in the field got nosing about, and put their heads into the nest (it was in a hole in a stump) and smashed all the eggs. That was finish No. 1.

About ten days later, the hen laid two more eggs and again on the bare ground, and as I could not find a nest to put them in I gave them to one of my children. Finish No. 2.

About a fortnight after this I happened to go into the aviary and, quite by chance, found the hen Virginian had built a nest in a bush, neatly lined with dry roots, and had two eggs. I looked next day and still only two eggs (much to my joy, as I knew two would take me plenty of rearing) and the hen sitting steadily. A curious thing happened now, for whereas until then the hen had been most 'scary,' she would now let me go quite close to her without coming off.

The cock now sang magnificently, especially in the evening; but he took no part at all in incubation (although we are told that the cock always sits on the nest when the hen leaves it). Before the sitting commenced he was most attentive in feeding the hen; and all through the time of incubation he fed his wife assiduously. They feed from the crop.

All went well, and on the 13th day, on looking into nest as I passed—July 8th—I found that both eggs had hatched. The young are queer looking little beggars covered over with very dark fluff, like young Bullfinches. I watched the process of feeding with great interest. The *modus operandi* was as follows: The cock arrived at the nest-side at stated intervals and fed the hen from the crop; she then gently raised herself on the nest and fed the young. For a week I think she hardly ever left the nest. All feeding was done by the cock. I gave them peas, strawberries, cherries, maggots, and mealworms, in addition to seed. At the end of a week the young had grown famously, and were a sort of coffee colour. On the eighth day the eyes opened; on the tenth they were well feathered; colour, a sort of dark brown; and to-day, July 18th, to my intense surprise, they have left the nest—I can't say *flown*, rather they have hopped out. I found them quite happy, on the floor in the midst of an admiring throng of Pekin Robins and their own proud and happy parents. They are queer little mortals with small crests, no tails, and enormous legs and feet. The funny thing is, the Pekin Robins feed them as well as their own parents.

The most wonderful part of the whole proceeding, to my mind, is this, that these birds have been reared in an aviary in which I have, besides the parents, two pairs of Pekin Robins and a pair of Shâmas. It only shows what can be done.

One other thing I have noticed, my Virginians hardly ever erect their crests; whereas in a cage they are always on end.

I ought also to say that for five days I was ill in bed, after the hatching, and the birds were fed by Mrs. Farrar; so that she must share the credit of our success.

I have been taken to task over my last article on Pekin Robins, because I ventured to run counter to the 'authorities.' Nevertheless, I must do so again here.

Mr. Gedney says that the four eggs were laid at intervals during *eight days*. All I can say is, mine laid every day like a well regulated bird. The cock, again, is stated to have *settled down upon the eggs in the hen's absence*. Mine was never so incautious.

The young were *hatched quite naked*. Mine were covered over with dark fluff.

The young, says Mr. Gedney, fledge rapidly, and leave the nest at the end of *five weeks*. I can only say with Dominie Sampson, Prodigious!!! Mine must have been very previous; as they left at the end of *ten days!*

Judging from "internal evidence," I should doubt Mr. Gedney's account of the nesting of the Virginian Cardinal.

II.

By the Rev. H. D. Astley.

Even to those uninterested in the ways and habits of birds the following experiment must prove attractive. Experiment is hardly the word, for it was by an accident that a pair of Virginian Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) made their escape from a large pheasantry, where they had been for two years, and had become inured to the many atmospheric changes of our climate; not that they are ever delicate birds, for they make little of a November fog or a January snowstorm. However, they escaped on the 15th of May (1885), and as they kept about I did not take much trouble to get them in again, but put out their tin of canary seed so that they might not starve, and also as an extra inducement for them not to wander far from home. The pheasantry in which they had been confined is situated amongst bushes, and close by a rookery, which is all paled in, and adjoins the front garden lawns and a fairly large shrubbery, the home of many a bird; rich in the growth of syringas, lilacs, box trees, and many other shrubs, amongst which spring up old elms, limes and firs. To this retreat, the Virginian Cardinals soon found their way, and the following morning after their escape, on going through the shrubbery, I saw the cock bird perched on the tip-top of a hawthorn. There he was, singing as loud and as fast as the notes would come, his beautiful scarlet breast looking more brilliant than usual in the

full morning sun of a May day, whilst the intense green of the hawthorn showed up the bird in strong relief. I felt as I saw him, that it was a sight that few, if any, in England were enjoying at that moment, or indeed at any other time, for I have never before heard of these American cousins being allowed their full liberty. Two days after this, in a very bare yew shrub, for it was nothing more, I observed a nest commenced. Although I never imagined that the Cardinals had already set to work, yet the nest struck me as being built of an unusual material, and its general appearance convinced me that no British bird with which I was familiar was constructing it. The nest was a very frail one, with no substantial foundation; merely bits of dead grass and some old pieces of rush lightly interwoven, the whole structure being decidedly small for the size of the bird; in fact, a Greenfinch would seem a more suitable occupant for it than its real owner.

The shrub stands at a corner where four paths meet, and is therefore the most exposed position a bird could choose for such an object. The same day that I discovered the commencement of this nest, the gardener told me that he had actually seen the hen Virginian on it, whilst the cock bird perched himself on the top of the shrub. Exactly a week after the pair had escaped, the first egg was laid; it was rather larger than a Sparrow's in size, and dirty white in colour, with large blotches of reddish-brown, thicker at the round end than at the other. The hen laid five eggs in as many consecutive days. To protect such an exposed position, I tied some branches of yew all over the bush, thereby making it difficult for passers-by to see the bird on her nest.

Four young birds were successfully hatched, the fifth egg being unfertile. The cock bird almost entirely ceased singing after the young were hatched, and his state of alarm was great if anyone passed near the nest. The eggs took exactly a fortnight to hatch. This brood of young Virginians soon came to grief; a bird or a beast of some kind (it is not known what, but Jays were the suspected culprits) made off with a couple. The two remaining birds I tried to rear by hand, but they seemed unable to digest the food and, to my grief, died. The old couple at once began hunting for another nesting place and fixed upon one quite close to the former site, but this time in a low box bush. The nest was quickly finished and four eggs deposited in it, strict injunctions being given to the gardeners not to disturb it in any way; and in order to try and guard against robbery from mice or squirrels, I tarred the stem of the bush as

far as I could and also placed some more branches of box upon the thinner parts at the top, so as to hide the eggs from prying eyes of unfriendly feathered fowl. But no! after the hen bird had sat out more than half her time, the eggs disappeared, and—disappointment No. 2.

The Virginian Cardinals themselves seemed to lose less heart than I did, for they actually commenced another nest the day after they had lost their second hope of a brood, and, *experientia docens*, they built their third nest in a holly tree of a somewhat weeping growth, placing it in the under side of an overhanging branch about 9ft. from the ground. Four eggs were again laid and hatched on the 5th of August of the same year (1885) in which the parents had escaped: but when the young birds, which grew apace, were about a week old once more two disappeared, evidently taken by a Jay or a Squirrel, for the nest was rather demolished, so in despair the other two were carried into the shelter of the house. One was considerably larger than the other, and it was this one that succumbed in a day or two, either to injuries or indigestion; the other bird, an ugly uncouth little creature, was fed upon sopped bread and plenty of fruit—strawberries, grapes, etc. He throve, and he turned out luckily to be a male bird. I had him for several years in his splendid scarlet plumage, insolently tame, and a delightful pet. He attained his red coat in the late autumn to a great degree, though, perhaps owing to the vicissitudes of his early life, not nearly so bright in colour as he became in his second year. To any stranger approaching his cage with friendliness, he would put up his crest and sing himself hoarse, and if allowed to come out, he would fly to one's shoulder and with grotesque movements shout into one's ear.

I must add that the parent birds, after having been decoyed back again into the pheasantry, were once more released in the following spring, much to their delight. They built again, but the hen bird, after laying two eggs, was found dead.

This year (1898) I turned out a pair of Virginians in April, which are still at large, and are to be seen, most days, flitting about among the trees, or across the lawns. They built a nest in June, but the heavy rains in the early part of the month seemed to damp their ardour, and they forsook just before the eggs, three in number, were due to hatch. Unlike the former pair, they have not nested again.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE SHOW OF OCTOBER, 1898.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Show of British and Foreign Birds, and Hybrids, held at the Crystal Palace, on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of October, by the National British Bird and Mule Club and the Foreign Bird Exhibitors' League, was a notable event in the history of Bird Shows, because it marks the emancipation of the exhibiting aviculturists from the bondage of the Canary "fancy" to which they had hitherto been subject.

The Show was an unqualified success, and reflects great credit upon Mr. FROSTICK, the energetic Hon. Secretary, and upon the Show Committee. (I think I may say this without appearing to blow my own trumpet, for, although a member of the Committee, I must confess that I only attended one meeting).

A remarkable feature was the almost entire absence of "wrongly classed" entries. I could only find one such entry in the Foreign classes—an unfortunate pair of Bengalese which had somehow got into Class 65. This proves what can be done to prevent (by careful drafting of the Schedule, and the kindly help of the Secretary) what is usually considered an unavoidable incident of Bird Shows.

It is to be regretted that the classes for common Waxbills and Grassfinches were so badly filled. These classes are new, and exhibitors are a curiously conservative race. Probably many thought that these classes would be over-crowded, and refrained from making entries in them for that reason. I believe that if they be repeated next year, the result will be quite different.

Considering the number of Bulbuls which appeared at the Palace in February, it is singular that the Bulbul class had to be cancelled at this Show.

HORATIO R. FILLMER.

BRITISH BIRDS.

As regards British birds, it is rather doubtful whether the commencement of October is the most suitable time to hold a Show: many being scarcely through the moult by that time and, therefore, not in show form. This being so, one was almost surprised to find so large a number of specimens, mostly of grand quality, staged at Sydenham on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of the month.

Neither the Bullfinches nor the Goldfinches were quite in show form: probably a month later they would have looked decidedly better. The Chaffinches, on the other hand, were a remarkably fine lot; the first and second prize-winners being especially fine specimens. There was also a good collection of Linnets and the competition was very keen. The winner of the first prize was a grand bird, in splendid feather and very steady. Several others, however, ran it very close.

The Twites and Redpolls also formed a large class, a grand specimen of the former species taking the first prize. A very large Redpoll, unusually light on the breast, although an undoubted specimen of *A. rufescens*, was a good second.

Class 6 (Siskins) contained some very nice birds. The winner of the first prize was a very highly-coloured bird, and strongly suggested colour feeding. The second was equally good, but not so bright in colour.

Class 7 (All other species of Resident Finches and Buntings). This class contained chiefly Hawfinches and Yellow Buntings. The first prize-winner—a Hawfinch—was a very fine specimen, in beautiful plumage. A very bright Yellow-hammer was second. Miss Hopwood's Reed-bunting was a very fair specimen, and there was also a Cirl Bunting—a species far more common in many parts than is usually supposed.

The Class for Migratory Finches and Buntings consisted chiefly of Bramblings. The first prize winner was far the best, being unusually rich in colour for the time of the year. A nice Mealy Redpoll was second, the other prizes going to Bramble-finches.

The Skylarks were not a large class, but the few there were were of great merit. Mr. May's bird, which was placed first, was one of the best Larks I have ever seen. The Robins were good: the first and second prize winners being beauties, but not so steady as they might have been. Some grand Blackbirds were shown: the winner of the first prize being, to my mind, quite perfect.

Song-thrushes were also an especially fine class, and there was little to choose between the winners of the first three prizes. The Starlings did not form a large class, but were of very good quality; Mr. Fulljames' "Jacob"—the first-prize winner—is an old friend and an exceedingly nice bird.

Class 14 (Magpies, Jackdaws, Jays and Choughs).—Mr. Fulljames' Chough was a perfect specimen, and well deserved the first place of honour. The second prize went to a nice Magpie,

which, however, appeared to have one hind toe slightly deformed. A Jackdaw was third, and a Jay fourth; both were exceedingly good birds.

Class 15 contained some very interesting "rare feathered specimens of British birds." Mr. Fulljames' Cinnamon Starling was easily first: it was a charming bird. The second prize went to a small and insignificant-looking Pied Wheatear, of small interest compared with the White Whitethroat shown by Mr. Fishburn, which I think should have been placed second: it was not an albino, having dark eyes, and showing one or two dark feathers on the back. A Cinnamon Blackbird, sent by Mr. Fulljames, was placed third; and a Cinnamon Chaffinch, belonging to the same gentleman, obtained the fourth prize. Other interesting exhibits in this class were a White Linnet, a Cinnamon Yellowhammer and a Yellow Greenfinch, all shown by Mr. G. C. Swailes.

Class 16 (All other species of Resident Insectivorous Birds not larger than a Woodlark). This was a very interesting class, and contained some birds very rarely seen in captivity. A Tree-creeper obtained the first prize, and, considering the difficulty there must be in keeping this bird in captivity, it deserved all it got. A Wren, shown by Mr. Maxwell, obtained the second prize: it looked happy and contented enough, but it would have stood little chance against a very nice pair of the same species (No. 215) which were entered in this class, but for some reason did not turn up until the judging was finished. A lovely Grey Wagtail (catalogued as a Pied) was deservedly third, and a nice Pied obtained the fourth prize. There were two Stonechats in this class: one was a nice bird, but the other was too ill to swallow a mealworm on the first day. Mr. Maxwell exhibited a beautiful Long-tailed Titmouse (*Acredula rosea*) which only received a V.H.C. card, although it surely deserved something more. Mr. Fulljames' exhibit (No. 230) was a typical specimen of the Continental form of the Long-tailed Tit, known to ornithologists as *Acredula caudata*, and differing from the British form by the absence of any dark markings on the head. A nice Crested Titmouse, a rare British bird nowadays, and a female Bearded Tit or Reedling were about the only other birds of especial interest in the class.

Class 17 was devoted to the larger Insectivorous Residents. No less than seven Greater Spotted Woodpeckers (*Dendrocopus major*) were here shown, but one pair did not arrive in time for competition. With regard to this species, it should be remem-

bered that the young birds have the *entire crown* crimson; in the adult male there is a patch of crimson at the *back of the head*, the crown being black. In the adult female there is no trace of red on the back of the head or neck.

The winner of the first prize, and its next door neighbour, were illustrations of how a Woodpecker should, and how it should *not*, be exhibited. Mr. Barnes' beautiful female, which well deserved her first prize, was shown in a very suitable cage in which an artificial log of cork-bark had been fixed. With this the bird was perfectly happy and contented; and it was most entertaining to watch it take a nut from the food-tin and insert it carefully in a hole in the log, where, with rapid and powerful blows from its bill, the shell was soon smashed and the kernel was quickly devoured. The other, No. 236, which one could not help pitying and comparing its surroundings with those of its neighbour, was not, in itself, a bad specimen; but it was a great pity that its owner was not better acquainted with the nature of a Woodpecker than to send it to a Show in a cage made for a Norwich Canary. The poor creature kept trying in vain to climb the sides of its prison, where it could obtain no foothold, and, when it hopped on to its perch, it fell backwards upon its tail, until, finally, it gave up all attempts at perching, and lay down on the bottom of its cage.

A lovely Missel Thrush, very tame and absolutely perfect, was deservedly second, and another of the same species, and almost equally good, took the third prize; the fourth going to another Great Spotted Woodpecker.

Class 18 contained a fine collection of Nightingales, and it was not easy to say which was the best bird: personally, I preferred the winner of the second prize to the one awarded first. A nice Blackcap was fourth.

Some very interesting birds were exhibited in the class for smaller Migrants. It was most unfortunate that those entered by Mr. George Jeffrey did not arrive until just before the Show was opened to the public, and, consequently, much too late for competition. The winner of the first prize was by far the best Yellow Wagtail that I remember to have seen; it was sent by Mr. Wm. Cullen, and claimed at the Catalogue-price of £5 5s. 6d. A Whinchat was awarded an extra first prize; Miss Hopwood's Wheatear was a good second. There were some very beautiful Redstarts: one exceptionally fine specimen, shown by Mr. Maxwell, obtained an extra second prize; a Spotted Flycatcher,

shown by the same gentleman, obtained third, and extra thirds were awarded to a Yellow Wagtail and a Redstart.

Several Swallows were shown in this class, and, although some of these were much better birds than many that have at former Shows taken first and second prizes, none of those here exhibited obtained very high honours. Swallows always look miserable and sadly out of place in cages, and it is satisfactory to find that the Judge did not encourage the capture of a bird so perfectly adapted to a life in the air and so hopelessly miserable in captivity. Several Whitethroats, Yellow Wagtails, a Red-backed Shrike, and a nice Garden Warbler were also shown in this class, which contained nearly sixty entries, some of which, however, were absent.

Class 20 (All other species of Migratory Insectivorous Birds). Five very good Ring Ouzels were shown in this class, the first, second and third prizes going to these birds; the fourth was won by a nice Redwing. A miserable young Cuckoo was shown here also, and illustrated clearly the folly, not to say cruelty, of caging this species.

The last class that I have to mention was, to me, the most interesting, as it contained several species of European birds which are not usually recognised as our fellow-countrymen. A very fine specimen of *Acredula caudata*, before mentioned as the Continental form of our Long-tailed Titmouse (*A. rosea*) was, rightly, I think, shown in this class by Mr. Maxwell; it did not receive a card, and I find on referring to the Catalogue, that it is therein marked "Wrong Class." Why this should be is not clear. I have not the N. B. B. and M. C. list of British birds by me, but I should be much surprised to hear that the *White-headed* form of the Long-tailed Tit is therein included. Some ornithologists do not recognise it as a good species, but it is, at any rate, a very well-defined sub-species, and is certainly not British although undoubtedly European.

Mr. Fulljames took all the prizes in this class, his rare Warbler, which I took to be *Hypolais polyglotta* (but on this point I am not certain) taking first. A Blue-throat, a most beautiful specimen, which appeared to belong to the Southern or White-spotted race (*Cyanecula wolfi*), was second. A nice specimen of the Greater Nightingale or Sprosser (*Daulias philomela*)—difficult to distinguish by the light in the tent from our *D. luscinia*—third; and a magnificent Rock Thrush fourth. The Rock Thrushes are a connecting link between the true Thrushes and the Chats, and the Chat-like habit of shaking the tail was

very noticeable in Mr. Fulljames' bird. A very fine pair of Hobbies (*Falco subbuteo*) and a Calandra Lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*) were also shown in this class.

D. SETH-SMITH.

PARROTS.

I may, perhaps, be expected to give a few notes on the classes I judged at the League's first Show, held at the Crystal Palace, on October 4th, 5th, and 6th.

As far as the Parrots were concerned, it was not a very good show. It is useless to expect one, unless better prizes can be offered, and a knowledge of the show brought home to the many possessors of Parrots scattered throughout the country. It has probably never dawned upon the minds of the greater part of them that there is such a thing as a Parrot Show: and, if it has, they would not risk their pets on a journey for prizes of 15/-, 10/-, 5/-, and 2/6. To say nothing of the risk and trouble of sending the birds, the prizes will not repay entry fees and carriage. The public is indebted for such interest as the shows have to the competition of two or three great exhibitors, like Mr. Fulljames, Mr. Maxwell, and Mr. H. B. Smith; though, every now and then, an interesting exhibit, such as Mr. Cocksedge's Red-mantled Parrakeets, is found in a single entry.

My first class was "Lories and Lorikeets," which had 14 entries, of which two, if not three, were absent. In this class I gave the 1st prize to a Forsten's Lorikeet, shown by Mr. Arthur in admirable trim (*a*); 2nd and 3rd went to Scaly-breasted Lorikeets—the two exhibits were equally smooth and glossy, but I gave 2nd to the pair as it is more difficult to show a good pair than one. Fourth went to a Blue Mountain, belonging to Mr. Silk. Reserve I gave to a bird entered as a Purple-breasted Lory (*b*)—this was the most uncommon bird in the class. Mr. Cushny showed a Ceram Lory in very good plumage. Mr. Maxwell's Ornamented lacked brilliancy of colour, and so did the Blue Mountains. Mr. Smith showed two Rubras, but they were too rough in plumage to obtain notice. It is a pity to show Parrots in what are called exhibition cages: it is absolutely impossible to judge a bird unless you can see all round it, and any Judge may be pardoned for passing a Parrot in such a cage. A Musky Lorikeet, shown by Mr. Frostick, was too sleepy to win a card.

(*a*) Mr. Arthur tells me that this bird has acquired a taste for canary-seed, and now will not touch anything else.—F. G. D.

(*b*) *Eos rieinata*—I had a specimen over three years ago.—R. P.

My next class was the Greys. Here I had but five birds before me—506 was absent. The 1st prize was won by Mrs. Peacock, with a fine bird in irreproachable condition and bloom. I know something of Grey Parrots, and I have never seen one better shown, perhaps never so well. Had Mrs. Peacock been a member of the League, she would have taken the prize for the best-conditioned Parrot in the Show. It was entered as a cock; it has the build of a hen.

Amazons—my next class—naturally provide more variety. There were seven birds before me, one was absent. First went to 513—a Festive belonging to Mr. Maxwell, which was very well shown: 2nd to an *inornata* of Mr. H. B. Smith; 3rd to one entered as "Spectacled." "Spectacled," Russ gives as a term for the White-browed. This bird almost looked to me like a young *xantholora*; 4th to a well-shown *ochrocephala*. The remaining birds were Blue-fronted, and were not in specially good plumage.

Class 43, for *Eclectus* Parrots, was poor; there was only one well shown. The only remarks I have to make are that all four birds were cocks, and the second prize belonged to a smaller species.

Perhaps my most interesting class was 44: here I had nine entries and no absentees. I was rather doubtful between the Meyer and the Bronze-wing for first place. But the Bronze-wing did not show himself well, owing to his cage, and so I gave it to the Meyer. The Bronze-wing, who a little later pulled himself together, was good enough for 1st. The Hawk-head to which I gave 3rd, was in brilliant health, but not quite through his moult; had he been, I will not say he might not have been first. A *lineolatus*, for the same reason—that he was not through his moult—got only H. C. There were three, of what I put down as *menstruus*. Two of these may have been in immature plumage, or they may have been of some species of *Pionus* unknown to me; they were in poor plumage (*c*).

I now come to Macaws—here there were five. First went to Mr. Fulljames' Hyacinthine, beautifully shown; 2nd to a Crimson and Green of Mr. Smith's, too much hidden by its cage; 3rd was a Blue and Yellow, and 4th an Illiger's. There was also Mr. Fulljames' Spix, the rarest bird in my classes—but in such indifferent plumage I could not even give it a card.

Class 46, for Lemon-crested Cockatoos, was cancelled, and with Class 47, for Salmon-crests, Leadbeaters, etc., my labours

(*c*) Mr. Fulljames showed a *Pionus senilis*, but when I was judging it looked rather rough.—F. G. D.

came to an end. Here, there were several Leadbeaters beautifully shown, as, indeed, was 538, a Salmon-crest. I gave 1st to a pair of Leadbeaters, because it is, as I say, more creditable to show a pair than one. But it is really no easy task to show a Salmon-crest with the spotless purity of Mr. Jacob's bird. Third went to Mr. Maxwell's well-shown hen Ganga. It is possible, however, to get Gangas into still better condition, and that kept flower than she would have otherwise been. Mr. Fulljames showed a pair, but they were not in very good bloom. Mr. Housden's two Leadbeaters were two cocks. In pen 539 there were a pair of Leadbeaters which I very highly commended, which were peculiar for the hen being richest in colour.

The Specials, that had to be judged by Mr. Camps and [illegible] were two: one for the rarest bird, and one for the best-[illegible]oned one, belonging to members of the League. Mrs. [illegible]ck's Grey would have won the latter, but she is not a [illegible]ber of the League; after that, it was a toss-up between Mr. [illegible]james' pair of Leadbeaters and his Crimson-wing—the prize fell to the pair. My rarest bird was Mr. Fulljames' Spix Macaw; but his Princess of Wales Parrakeet, Mr. Maxwell's Golden-shouldered, and Mr. Cocksedge's Red-mantled Parrakeets were all as rare, and in infinitely better condition. So I felt my classes must resign that prize. Where were the "Unicolors" Mr. Fulljames showed me at Brooklyn? (*d*) But a prize for the rarest bird is rather difficult to award. As far as I know Spix's Macaw, the Princess of Wales Parrakeet, the Red-mantled Parrakeet, and the Golden-shouldered are all one as rare as the other.

Again, what is meant by the rarest? The one of which there are fewest specimens in the world? Who can tell that? Or the one that comes least often into the bird-market? But one year that is one, another another. Three years ago I would have given it to the Ganga Cockatoo; now that is comparatively often seen. Perhaps Paradise Parrakeets, which at one time could be easily bought, would win that prize to-day. However, I must close, leaving my questions for others to answer.

F. G. DUTTON.

FOREIGN FINCHES.

The classification appeared to me extremely liberal, the arrangement of the classes was good, and a series of notes, giving detailed instructions as to entering birds in their proper classes, made it practically impossible for any exhibitor to enter his birds

(*d*) Dead, I have since heard. F. G. D.

wrongly. Moreover, very special inducements were held out to those aviculturists who are unable to keep rare and costly birds, by providing a number of classes limited to the common and cheap species. Now we hear a *great* many complaints about the impossibility of the smaller aviculturists competing with the owners of big and costly collections, and about the iniquity of the latter in "sweeping the board" at all the Shows: here was an opportunity for the grumblers—special classes for the common Waxbills, the common Grassfinches and the Mannikins, and prize money equal to that offered in the classes for rare birds. What was the result? In each of these classes the number of entries was very small, and the birds by no means equal in condition to those exhibited in the classes for rare birds. It seems unlikely that the Committee will consider it worth their while to provide these classes at any future Show.

In Class 49 (Weavers and Whydahs) the most striking exhibit was a large cage containing a flock of Paradise Whydahs, all male birds in full breeding plumage. Such a spectacle alone was well worth a journey to the Palace. The most uncommon bird in the class (and probably in the Show) was No. 566, named by the owner, Mr. Fulljames, a "Long-tailed Combasou," and which might be described as a Combasou with a tail of a Whydah, but the beak was black, not yellow like that of a Combasou. There were several excellent Paradise Whydahs, only one of which (No. 569) was accompanied by a female. A pair of birds, where the sexes differ, makes a far more interesting and valuable exhibit than a single bird. There were several Pintailed Whydahs, most of which were exceedingly timid and wild; while all their brethren of the Paradise species were steady and placid. A rare Weaver, sent by Mr. Swaysland, was, I think, a specimen of the Yellowish Weaver. A *Chera procne*, sent by Mr. Housden, was in poor condition. Two of the rare Crimson-banded or Cut-throat Whydahs were exhibited, neither of which was in first-rate trim. There were some good Orange, Oryx, Crimson-crowned and Madagascar Weavers, and a very nice pair of Combasous.

Class 50 was one of the disappointments: it was limited to the commoner Waxbills and had only eight entries, one of which was absent. No. 574 was a nice brightly-coloured pair of Zebra Waxbills, and 580 a good pair of Orange-cheeks. There was one entry of St. Helenas (which appeared to be both cocks), one Avadavat, and no Grey Waxbills.

Class 51 was splendid. Three specimens of the Red-faced Finch (*Pytelia afra*), a male and two females, were contributed

by Mr. L. W. Hawkins, and each was exhibited separately. It seems almost a pity that a pair should not have been exhibited together: however, by separating them the owner gained three awards instead of two. A very lovely female Violet-eared Waxbill, in the most exquisite condition, was sent by Mr. Maxwell, and a fine pair of the same species, by Mr. Fulljames; but the latter were, unfortunately, moulting. There were several very good Crimson Finches, one of which, sent by Mr. Maxwell, was decidedly brighter than the others. Two good Rufous-tails were contributed by Mr. Maxwell and Mr. H. B. Smith. There were several excellent pairs of Cordon-bleus, the best of which belonged to Mr. Fulljames. The Sydney Waxbills were poor. Mr. Smith's Crimson-winged Waxbill was good: why is it that one hardly ever sees a hen of this species? A Green Avadavat (593) seemed to have sustained some injury on its journey.

Class 52.—Gouldians and Parrot Finches; 13 entries, and all good. Mr. Maxwell's Black-headed Gouldian (615) excelled in the brilliancy of his hues and the satiny polish of his plumage, and was, moreover, decorated with an exceptionally long pair of pin-feathers in his tail. The same exhibitor sent a grand cock Parrot Finch (614). Why is it that Parrot Finches, which are easy birds to keep in condition, almost always look rough at Shows? A Three-coloured Parrot Finch (612) was an interesting, but not a very pretty, bird.

Class 53.—Another class for common birds, and another disappointment, contained eight entries, including a good pair of Parson Finches, two good Diamond Sparrows, and some moderate Zebra and Ribbon Finches.

Class 54.—Grassfinches and Cuba Finches. This was principally interesting on account of the very beautiful Long-tailed Grassfinches, more elegant in shape than the Parson Finches, which they closely resemble, and with more delicately-shaded tints of grey and brown. Mr. Hawkins' pair (626) were absolutely perfect in condition and plumage, and others were almost as good. The Masked Finches are hardly as pretty. Mr. Maxwell's Bicheno's Finches were also in exquisite plumage. Is it possible to distinguish the sexes of this species by inspection? With all due respect to certain avicultural writers, I do not think it possible to distinguish them *with certainty*—of course, one can make a pretty good guess in some cases. Mr. Fulljames sent a good pair of Cuba Finches, and there were several Red-headed Finches.

Class 55 (Java Sparrows) contained 13 entries. The

White birds were very good ; one always *hopes* that no faulty feathers have come out in washing them. The Greys, as a rule, were less perfect and wilder.

Class 56 (Mannikins), a poor class. Mr. Fulljames sent a rare bird (569) which, unfortunately, looked very ill. Mr. Maxwell sent a fine male specimen of *Munia pectoralis*, to my mind, the only *very* attractive species of Mannikin, except the Bengalese ; the latter are always charming. Mr. Fulljames has a good pair of Pied Mannikins, and Mrs. Spencer a very nice pair of Brown and White Bengalese.

Class 59 was the poorest class of Cardinals I have yet seen at the Palace. Miss Jackson's Green bird, no longer in his first youth, was the best. A pair of Red-crested birds, belonging to Mr. Ball, were good in condition and colour, but very wild, and were in too small a cage. The Dominicans were very wild and in poor condition.

Class 60 (Grosbeaks, Finches, and Buntings) had some very nice and interesting birds. Entries 675 and 677, both belonging to Mrs. Frostick, were birds of two species I had not previously met with, and both, judging from their appearance, were somewhat nearly related to the Serin Finches. No. 676, belonging to the same exhibitor, was a pair of Grey Singing Finches in particularly neat plumage ; for some reason or other, one hardly ever sees a good Grey Singing Finch at a Show. No. 667 was a bright but tailless specimen of *Chrysomitris tristis*, and 668 a good Black-headed Siskin : 666, a moderate pair of Pileated Finches. The remaining birds were a good Nonpareil, a Jacarini Finch, a pair of Saffron, and two pairs of Green Singing Finches.

C. S. Simpson.

DOVES AND SOFT-BILLED BIRDS.

Class 48.—Mr. J. B. Housden's Green Nicobar Pigeons were placed first (with special) as they have been before ; his other pair being second. Beautiful birds in themselves, but clumsy when confined in a Parrot's cage, and under such circumstances decidedly handicapped. Mr. D. Seth-Smith's Jungle Bush Quails (3rd) were pretty, but very timid. The Diamond and Zebra Doves, as well as the Necklaced Turtle Doves, were all pleasing to the eye. But this class was poorly represented.

Class 61.—A very good class, and a difficult one to award individual prizes to. Mr. Fulljames carried off the first three

prizes and a special. Some may consider that the first and special prizes would have been better awarded to the rare Blue and Black Tanager, rather than to the Tricoloured. But they were all beautiful, and perhaps all worthy of the first honours, though unfortunately unable to win them. One or two of the scarlet Tanagers were in good plumage, especially that which was 4th, being extremely well shown in a cage with a brilliant green background (Mrs. Frostick's good taste).

Mr. Phillips' Superb Tanager was in glorious colour, and only deprived of greater honours than V.H.C. by the fact of his meeting with rarer cousins in competition.

Class 64.—Amongst Starlings, Mynahs, Troupials, etc., Mrs. H. C. im Thurn took 1st with a very tame and pretty Yellow and Black Troupial. Mr. H. J. Fulljames' Andaman and Black-headed Starlings were in lovely condition and well shown. Commendation was given to a healthy pair of apparently Jubile Rose-coloured Pastors (Mr. J. B. Housden's) (*c*). It was evident that the *filthy* condition of the cage in which a Long-tailed Glossy Starling was confined shut the latter off from a chance of being favourably noticed. It was a pity that Mr. H. B. Smith's Purple-headed Glossy Starling was somewhat in the middle of its moult.

Class 65.—A miscellaneous collection, in which were two or three very interesting birds. Mr. C. P. Arthur's Green-billed Toucan (a previous winner of 37 first prizes and 34 specials) added yet one more of each to his list of triumphs. Mr. Fulljames' Pink-crested Touraco (2nd) was a most beautiful bird, and debarred from conquering the aforementioned Toucan by his misfortune in having a malformed foot, owing to some accident. A very well-conditioned Shâma, tame and freshly moulted, won 3rd (Mr. A. Jones'). Other birds noticed by the Judge were a lovely Yellow-tufted Honey-eater (Mr. C. T. Maxwell's); an Orange-breasted Toucan, very timid (Mr. Geo. Jacob's); and a splendid Tuï (Mrs. Frostick's). Nor must I pass over Mr. Fulljames' Blue-cheeked Barbet, which won 4th (in fine condition). Mrs. Frostick's Grey Honey-eaters (H.C.) were, apparently, moulting, though not to such an extent as to disfigure them, and they had a good roomy cage.

HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

(*c*) These were in moult, at which season the salmon tint becomes clouded; previous to their moult they were in full adult colour.—A. G. B.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IMPOSSIBLE MULES.

SIR,—It has been asserted with great vehemence by certain av[i]culturists that certain hybrids are impossible. Among those especial[ly] cited are (curiously enough) crosses between the two nearly related ge[nera] *Serinus* and *Sycalis*.

In one of my aviaries I breed a good many examples of the Saffr[on] Finch, and, early in the present year, I had all my breeding Canaries in th[e] same aviary. Before these were removed one or two of them were observed singing vociferously to hen Saffron-finches. The young of the latter have now moulted and during the process two of them died, but a third (although it walks like its mother) has none of the saffron tinting of *S. flaveola*, whilst the flights are largely coloured with Canary yellow. This bird is a little shorter than typical Saffron-finches; and I have no doubt that it is a genuine hybrid, produced without intention on my part.

A. G. BUTL[ER]

PARROT FINCHES.

SIR, — I hope Mr. Phillipps has satisfied himself that he has successfully reared some young Parrot Finches this Summer: but I cannot quite understand how there can be any chance of confusing the young and adults of this species. The young at first are of a very dull green on the upper parts, with the throat, breast and belly of a dingy yellowish brown, and there is not any scarlet visible for the first few weeks after the birds leave the nest.

I started, this Spring, in my garden-aviary (covered portion heated with hot-water pipes) with three Parrot Finches—a pair and an odd female. On April the 20th, on my return from the Continent, I was told that the Parrot Finches had a nest in a box, and that the young had been heard for some time. On the 25th, a young brood was sitting all day at the mouth of the hole, and on the next day three fine young ones had flown and were sitting on the highest perch in the aviary, carefully tended by the parents. They were easily reared on canary seed and millet, the parents always having access to fresh chickweed, shepherd's purse, etc.

On June the 6th I left home. At that time there were slight indications of scarlet on the foreheads and round the angles of the mouths. On my return, on August the 1st, I found that the young had entirely assumed the bright colour of the adult, and, in fact, were only to be distinguished by the superior smartness of their new suits. The old birds went to nest again, but only hatched one young bird, which left the nest prematurely and perished. I have had eggs laid in my aviary before, but, until this Summer, without young being hatched.

While young Parrot Finches are in the nest, and for a week or more after flying, there are to be seen small warts on the edges of the gapes, like small opals or cats'-eyes. Similar bead-like warts are noticeable outside the mouths of young Gouldian Finches, with the addition that, in these, there are conspicuous black spots on the palate, which are seen when the

young are gaping for food. I did not have the opportunity of noticing whether, in the case of young Parrot Finches, these palate-marks exist. I have just been looking at some newly-hatched Gouldian Finches, and, in the semi-darkness of their nest-boxes, these jewel-like beads were very noticeable—in fact, the idea suggests itself whether they are of service in indicating to the parent bird where food has to be placed. Some of our members may have noticed whether similar decorations exist about the mouths of other species building in holes or covered nests.

W. H. ST. QUINTIN.

SIR,—Referring to Mr. St. Quintin's letter, I had satisfied myself that I, or rather the parents, had successfully reared some young Parrot Finches or I should not have made the statement that appears on page 199. As I stated, I began with four adult birds, and on August 16th I saw five, so that settles the matter. Of these five, two appeared to me to be young birds; on September 11th, I saw a group of six, so I was right on this point also.

My inner aviary is as full of small trees, shrubs, and bushes as it is possible each spring to stock it with, many dying each year; and my luxuriant spring crops of wheat, oats, grass, rape, etc., etc. mostly perish as the summer goes by, on account of the over-crowding. So thick is the foliage that it is exceedingly difficult to get a fair view of the birds, especially of such restless creatures as Parrot Finches, who are all over the place, and who delight before everything else in creeping like mice through the very thickest of the ground vegetation, sometimes the whole flock being completely buried in a patch of long grass, which they honey-comb with field-mouse-like runs: doubtless they are in search of minute insects. In addition to the vegetation, the double wire-netting obstructs the view; and my eyes are no longer young. Moreover, stretching across nearly half the aviary, at about two-thirds from the front, there still stands what was once the "gymnasium;" years ago this was turned into a triangular bird-structure, the favourite haunt of the Mynahs; and now it is covered with Virginia creeper, and, with some elder bushes, completely cuts off from sight the back of the aviary. During the nesting-season, I never intrude into this sanctum, and sometimes lose sight of shy species for weeks.

These two young birds were fairly advanced when first noticed, the throat patch being of considerable size, and of the colour of that of the face of the female Red-faced Love-bird. They also had a good show of dingy red in the rear, the *green, especially of the under parts*, being of a dull, almost blackish, tinge.

I have since thrown open the doors which connect the two parts of the aviary; and now the little birds come right up to the house, but dart off into the thicket if the garden door be opened.

On October 6th, on peeping into the aviary through a window, I found another brood of three, whose squeaks had been heard for some days, on the grass just below me. These were babies indeed, one being scarcely able to fly; but all, like the first lot, had a certain amount of dingy red behind; and they further differed from Mr. St. Quintin's birds in that not one, not one of the whole five in fact, had the dingy yellowish brown extending to the belly or anything like it. Two, who are very independent, have

only a slight wash of yellow on the throat, while the other, who still sticks to its mater (or pater), is wholly green in the front, not a suspicion of yellow being discernible. Probably the former are males and the latter a female. The beaks are whitish yellow. It seems to me that, with the one exception, the young became independent of their parents at a very early age.

These birds, it must be understood, have been bred in the open garden. The parents have access to sop and to the insectivorous food supplied to the Warblers; and they always eagerly avail themselves of any opportunity that may present itself of snapping up a stray mealworm.

I may add that my Parrot Finches certainly prefer nesting in a low, well-sheltered, almost dark, spot, rather than high up in the aviary; and they prefer making "independent" nests to making use of boxes or the like.

On October 20th, I caught and examined two of the last brood. Both were in full moult, and coming rapidly into colour. A supposed male had the under parts dull black-green; but the under parts (not counting the throat) of the supposed female were rather of a yellow-green. The bill of the latter was orange with dark brown tip; the lower mandible of the former was orange and the upper black.

REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

SWALLOWS IN CAGES.

SIR,—I cannot help making a protest against the confinement of Swallows in cages. One might almost as well try to keep a fish out of water. To see these poor birds fluttering against the bars of a tiny cage at a Bird Show is really heart-rending.

A Swallow is a bird of the air, and settles chiefly on a house-roof or tree for the purpose of rest. Swallows feed on the wing entirely, catching (as everyone knows) the insects in the midst of their graceful and marvellous flight. It must be misery to them to be forced to peck at their food from a tray whilst seated on a perch. Both actions are *utterly* unnatural to them for the purpose of obtaining food.

One of these birds, exhibited at the Crystal Palace on the 4th of October, had so beaten its wings against the bars as to make the shoulders bleed, and the perch on which it tried to balance itself was bespattered with blood.

There are so many birds that can be made happy in cages, that it seems unnecessary (if nothing else) to imprison a bird which nobody can induce me to believe can feel anything but wretched, having within its inmost being a strong instinct to do that which captivity prevents it from accomplishing (*f*).

HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

(*f*) We heartily endorse Mr. ASTLEY's protest. This is a matter which the National British Bird and Mule Club would do well to take in hand. What makes the thing still more cruel is that the birds are all wild-caught, and not, as is often supposed, hand-reared.—ED. and R.P.

BREEDING OPERATIONS AT MICKLEFIELD IN 1898.

SIR,—Once more I send you a record of the doings of my feathered friends during the present year.

The first to lead off were the Cherry-finches. They built a lovely nest in a box tree, warmly lined with feathers, and, strangely enough, *nested on the outside* with the same. They laid three good-sized, longish, white eggs; sat the full time, but failed to hatch: why, I do not know. I have had this pair for years out of doors.

I will not trouble to record the doings of such common stuff as Zebra-finches, Silverbills, Ribbon Finches or Avadavats; but there are a lot of youngsters knocking about.

I have already given an account of the nesting of the Pekin Robins; they laid again twice after that—three eggs each time, but I took the nests for the sake of the Virginian Cardinals. I will say no more about these latter here, as I have written a special article on their nesting.

My American Mocking-birds built a beautiful nest, but they did not lay. I quite hope to rear some next year—the second attempt is usually, with me, successful.

My Malabar Mynahs built twice, a regular Starling's nest in a box; they laid about six eggs each time, the same colour as our English Starling but rather smaller and rounder: all were unfertile—I blame the cock.

In Parrakeets I have done fairly well, I think.

I reared three grand young Redrumps, two cocks and a hen (all sold long since—I say this for my own protection).

My Kings laid three eggs (at least the Queen did) and sat well, but they did not hatch. I think the reason was that the cock was a new one and had been in the aviary only about a week when she laid. My Queen must be eight years old, to my knowledge. She lays regularly every year.

My Crimson-wings laid three eggs, *fertile*, but got disturbed. I hope for better luck next time.

My Turquoisines laid eggs, but failed to rear any young.

The success of which I am proudest is the one recorded in last month's Magazine—the rearing of African Firefinches. I believe such an event is quite unique in aviculture, (*g*) as most people can't keep them alive.

I have had eggs from Zebra Waxbills and Cordon Bleus, but no young reared.

Total for the year—*Nests* of Virginian Cardinals, Pekin Robins, Redrumps and African Firefinches, and a lot of common stuff not reckoned.

Good attempts—Malabar Mynahs, Mocking Birds, King's, and Crimson-wings (*h*).

C. D. FARRAR.

(*g*) Mr. WIENER states that "this bird has been bred times innumerable:" while, according to Dr. RUSS, "not one of all the Astrilds nests so easily as this." It is therefore only the fact of its breeding in *Britain* which is (possibly) unique.—ED.

(*h*) We have been obliged to omit some parts of Mr. FARRAR'S letter, which appeared likely to give offence.—ED.

BREEDING AVADAVATS.

SIR,—Your readers may be interested to hear that I have two young Indian Avadavats, which left the nest on the 4th of September. One is very vigorous and feeds itself and bathes freely; the other bird is not quite so forward.

The old birds built a round nest in a fir-branch in my garden-aviary, sat in turn, and both fed from the crop. There were no empty eggs. The young are brown, like the mother, with black beaks.

On reading the foot-note on page 177 of the August number of our Magazine, I removed my already-suspected Pekin Robins from the aviary. Up to that time I had not one young bird, although my birds had been out since May the 2nd, and I know some had laid and sat, including Cordon Bleus. Since the removal of the Pekins I have Zebra Finches, African Silverbills, Avadavats, and three young Cordon Bleus. The feathers were just shewing when I picked up two young Cordon Bleus on the sand, and the next morning the male bird was seen flying about with another in his beak. They are now sitting again.

All my Waxbills partake freely of bread and milk, which I make at the breakfast-table each morning; they also have hard-boiled yolk of egg, mealworms, gentles and wasp-grubs.

GRACE ASHFORD.

CROSSBILLS.

SIR,—On the 15th of August, when I was staying at Worthing, a dead Crossbill, which had been caught in a trap, was brought to me, and proved to be a young male, showing one or two reddish feathers on the back. I was told at the same time that two more had been caught a few days before by a bird-catcher near the same place, and I subsequently saw one of these in a cage—a remarkably steady, tame bird.

On the 18th of the month, as I was passing some tall fir trees close to the town of Worthing, a Crossbill flew down in front of me, amongst some Sparrows, immediately attracting my attention by its unmistakable note—*chit, chit, chit*—and its tameness; it was quite as tame as the Sparrows and allowed me to approach to within a few feet of it.

Again, on the 23rd of the month, when about a mile from the same place, I heard the note of a Crossbill, and, approaching, saw the bird, perched upon a dead branch some ten feet above my head. This one was also remarkably tame, and allowed me to stand just under it and watch it for quite five minutes before it took flight.

On August the 26th four Crossbills, seen about two miles from Worthing, were flying separately, all in a North-Easterly direction. I had no difficulty in identifying them by their note and flight.

I have neither seen nor heard one since. Those that I saw quite close were young birds, showing little or none of the red plumage.

D. SETH-SMITH.

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(Continued from page 2 of cover).

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The charge for advertisements in this column is 2d. for each bird or species of bird advertised. Not more than twelve words will be allowed for any bird or species of bird. Names and addresses of advertisers, free. All advertisements should reach the Secretary at least 7 days before the end of the month, and MUST, *in every case, be prepaid in stamps. No advertisements will be inserted unless this rule be complied with. The Council reserve the right to refuse any advertisement they consider undesirable. Each advertisement should be written on a separate sheet of paper, with the name and address of the advertiser at the foot.*

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The Subscription to Members of the Avicultural Society is 2/6, to others 5/- per annum.

NEW MEMBER.

(Members of the Avicultural Society can join without formal election).

Mr. C. P. Arthur, Market Place, Melksham.

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Mr. Geo. D. Glasscor, 45, Gaywood Road, Walthamstow.
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Notices to Members:

The Hon. Sec. regrets that he is at present without information as to the of Medals at the recent Crystal Palace Show—but hopes to be able to publish next month.

(*The above is an advertisement and is paid for as such*).

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☞ Attention is drawn to the Important Notices on page II. of cover.

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THE

Avicultural Magazine.

BEING THE JOURNAL OF

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF

FOREIGN AND BRITISH BIRDS.

VOL. V.—No. 50. *All rights reserved.* DECEMBER, 1898.

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

The Subscription to the Avicultural Society is 7/6 per annum, d[ue] the 1st of November in each year. The entrance fee is 2/6. The *Avicu[ltural] Magazine* is sent free to members monthly. Members joining at any t[ime] during the year are entitled to the back numbers for the current year.

All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary H. R. FILLMER, 52, Ship Street, Brighton. All letters must contain a stamped envelope for reply. Any change of address should be at o[nce] communicated to the Secretary.

Advice is given, *by post*, by members of the Council to mem[bers] the Society upon all avicultural subjects. All queries are to be se[nt] Hon. Secretary, to be by him forwarded to the members of the who will answer them.

The Magazine is published by Messrs. BETTS & SONS, Lim[ited], 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., and is dispatched by them monthly t[o] members. Orders for extra copies, back numbers, and bound vol[umes] should be addressed to them and not to the Secretary.

Cases for binding Vol. IV. can now be obtained from Me[ssrs.] Betts & Sons, Ltd., 2, Gray's Inn Place, W.C., price 1/3 each. The[y] will be forwarded on receipt of cash with order, post free and carefully packed. Messrs. Betts are prepared to undertake the binding of the Magazine for members, for 1/- plus cost of case and postage.

THE SOCIETY'S MEDAL.

The Medal has been awarded to Mr. MEADE-WALDO for breeding the Chinese Quail (*Excalfactoria chinensis*) and to the Rev. C. D. FARRAR for breeding the African Fire-finch (*Lagonosticta minima*) both for the first time in the United Kingdom.

RESIGNATION OF A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL.

Mr. REGINALD PHILLIPPS has retired from the Council. He has been a member of the Executive Committee since the foundation of the Society, and he will be greatly missed. It would be difficult to exaggerate the indebtedness of the Society to Mr. PHILLIPPS, for its success has been largely due to him. Mr. PHILLIPPS hopes to continue to write for the Magazine, and to help in other ways.

NOTICES UNDER RULE 3.

The Executive Committee have to announce, in accordance with Rule 3, that the following persons, not having paid their subscriptions for last year, have ceased to be members of the Society.

Mr. F. W. LEADBEATER, 215, London Road, Sheffield.
Dr. JOHN MACGAVIN, Trafalgar House, Trafalgar Road, Greenwich.

NEW MEMBERS.

Mr. F. PEKHOLTZ, Granton Lodge, Granton Road, Edinburgh.
Mr. GEO. D. GLASSCOE, 45, Gaywood Road, Walthamstow.
Mr. DONALD SWIFT, 58, Avenue Road, Crouch End, N.

One of the Candidates proposed last month was objected to by five members and therefore failed to be elected. The signed objections have been verified by the Scrutineer in accordance with the Rules.

(Continued on page 3 of cover).

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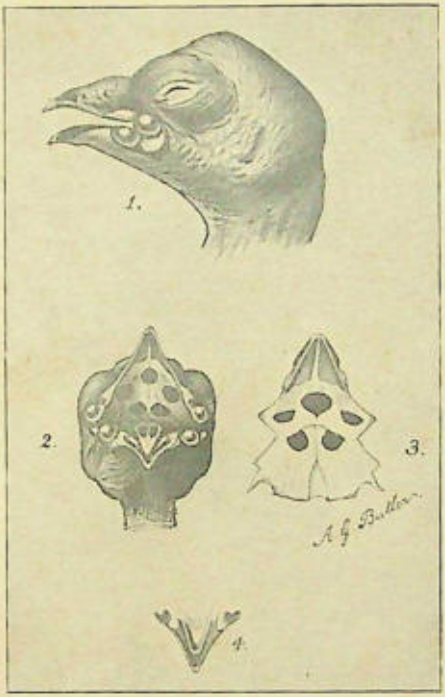
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1. Young Gouldian Finch head in profile, magnified about three times.

2. Ditto being fed: from front, magnified about twice.

3. Palate and upper mandible from another specimen, still more enlarged.

4. Lower mandible with tongue removed to show markings.

THE

Avicultural Magazine,

BEING THE JOURNAL OF THE

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

. V.—No. 50. *All rights reserved.* DECEMBER, 1898.

N THE ORNAMENTATION OF THE MOUTH IN THE YOUNG GOULDIAN FINCH.

(Poephila mirabilis).

By ARTHUR G. BUTLER, Ph.D.

On September 24th I received a box from our member W. H. St. Quintin, containing four young of the Red-headed y of the Gouldian Finch, with an expression of his wish I should describe them for the Magazine.

The birds, as I subsequently learnt, were hatched on the 15th of the month, or possibly a day or two earlier (in a covered nest-box). The mother died on the 6th, but an unattached Black-headed hen undertook incubation jointly with the surviving male parent. The latter died on the 17th, and the Black-headed foster-parent continued to feed the young until the 23rd, when she also died; the nestlings consequently expired from cold on the same day, their crops still containing seed when they reached me.

One of the peculiarities of these squabs is the total nakedness of their bodies, and that too at so advanced an age; but in this respect they do not stand alone in the family *Ploceidæ*, for Dr. Russ comments upon the complete and repulsive bareness of the young of the African Silver-bill. The most interesting feature, however, in this species consists in the striking and peculiar ornamentation of the outside and inside of the mouth, the object of which, as it seemed to me, must be to enable the parents to feed the young in the partial obscurity of the nest; but the suggestion was made, by one to whom I showed the young birds, that should a small snake insert its head into the nest, it would be unable to recognize its prey in nestlings so startlingly ornamented.

The snake theory is a favourite one with the mor
enthusiastic of modern evolutionists, but I hold to the vie
that the ornamentation is merely a guide to the open mout
the infant bird, and in this opinion I am pleased to find th
have the support both of Mr. St. Quintin and Mr. Meade-Wa

In a letter dated September 25th, Mr. St. Quintin w
as follows:

"As regards the mouth-ornamentation, in a short
on the breeding of Parrot-finches, which I have lately se
Mr. Fillmer, I mentioned that the nestlings of that species h
somewhat similar bead-like warts on the mouth (as the Goul
Finches).

"I found yesterday, in a nest-box, some partly
young Cordon-bleus which had died; these also show
mouth decoration, but they were not fresh enough to se
you.

"In that paper I suggested that the iridescent wa
palatal spots might be of service to the parents at feeding-
in the case of birds breeding in covered nests or in holes.
on the other hand, I do not know any of the native
breeders, or those with domed nests, whose nestlings have a
special growths or excrescences; though some of them feeding
in holes, as Tits, and also birds building in the semi-darkness of
dense bushes, as Hedge-sparrows and others, have brightly
coloured gapes, which may answer the same purpose of indi-
cating where a hungry mouth remains to be filled.

"Mr. Meade-Waldo, who is staying with me, has just
bred some Black-headed Gouldian Finches; and tells me that,
in the darkness of a nest-box in the upper part of the aviary
under the roof, the six young birds could be easily counted by
the gleaming beads on the edges of their mouths, even when
nothing else was visible."

It is asserted by certain evolutionists of the modern
school that every type of ornamentation has a definite object and
is necessary to the preservation of the species, but I am not
convinced of the truth of this assumption; for I believe that
excess of vital energy in any part of an organism may find vent
in the production of a monstrous growth, which may not be
absolutely necessary, though not injurious: or may only serve
the same purpose as a far less remarkable modification.

The swollen and expanded base of the upper mandible
in *P. mirabilis* (when first hatched) is dull yellow, but as it

narrows towards the hardened apex it is crossed by a broad blackish belt; the tip is horn-yellow; and the culmen towards the tip bears a little conical prominence which renders the end of the upper mandible obliquely truncate when viewed in profile.

The lower mandible seen from below is horn-yellowish, partly bordered and traversed just before the tip (which is reflexed) by a broad blackish A-shaped band.

The most curious part of the mouth-ornamentation consists in the character of what Dr. Russ calls the waxy-glands (the expansions and warts at the posterior edge of the upper mandible and at the back of the opening). The lateral expansion is indeed not remarkable, being less developed than in many species and of a pale milky yellowish tint; but at the back of the mouth are three prominent rounded tubercles in the form of a triangle, two at the base of the mandibles of a bright and almost metallic glistening opaline blue and one behind these of a pale yellow tint.

The inside of the mouth is either ivory-white or flesh-pink, the palate conspicuously marked (like a domino) with five more or less round black spots in pentagonal form; one in front, two wide apart in the centre, and two near together at the back; and in front of each of the four posterior ones, an oblique rosy longitudinal streak (probably arteries, and owing their colour to blood); the inside of the upper mandible is marked by a broad A-like band each ramus of which is pterygoid; very broad beyond the middle, then abruptly narrowed and tapering to a point.

The tongue is crossed just in front of its centre by a broad belt, or by two large pear-shaped black spots, with apex directed forward. The lower mandible is bordered inside with black, and behind this border is a submarginal black V-shaped band. Altogether the ornamentation of the mouth in this young bird is very remarkable.

My son and I have carefully examined the metallic tubercles under the microscope and find that they are filled with dark brown pigment, the iridescent colouring being produced, as I anticipated, by fine reticulation of the outer surface: this reticulation is clearly discernible under a high power. A transverse section shows the metallic gloss on the convex face of the tubercle with the mass of brown pigment behind it.

BREEDING REDRUMPS.

Observations and Little Difficulties.

By A. SAVAGE.

I had some peculiar experiences last season with my pair of Redrumps, and relating them may interest the readers of the *Avicultural Magazine*. The pair I refer to is the old pair now in my possession over three years, in their (about) half cubic mètre box-cage, and which have reared so many young—thirty-one—all disposed of, except one that escaped. They have hatched in all thirty-four, but three died this season quite young, as will be seen further on. I must admit that the cock is not altogether an exemplary father when the young leave the nest, and, had I not kept an eye on him, many of them (cocks especially) he would surely have killed on leaving it, days before they could feed themselves. His conduct in this respect is probably due to their being in rather close quarters: the young not being able to get far enough out of his way, and the parents being very regular and quick breeders. For the last three years they have had three nests each year, and *each year* the eggs were laid at the commencement of March, May, and July, as regular as clockwork, almost to the day, and never a week's difference in the dates. Every year I have noticed the cock's impatience to get his youngsters off his hands just when the hen was about to lay again, but formerly it was mostly with the second and third nests—the second especially—but this year he commenced maltreating the young of the first nest, and days before they could feed themselves. I caught him in the act one morning, and, just as he was doing his best to throttle one poor little one, gave him a good "spanking" with my handkerchief, which frightened and stopped him for an hour or so; but he began operating on them again in the afternoon, and I had to take him away and cage him alone. I was rather loth to do so, as I could see the hen was coming on to lay, but I acted on the "bird in the hand" proverb, and out he came! For the rest of the day quiet was restored, and the hen spent her time in looking after and feeding her frightened and half-beaten-to-death youngsters.

The next day she laid the first egg of her second nest, which eventually consisted of five eggs, and continued feeding her first little ones while laying this clutch. Everything went well during the time she was sitting, the cock bird being close at hand but out of sight, in his prison-cage, making a big fuss and noise; and during her sitting process the first young learned to

feed themselves. Although the cock was taken away before she laid, I rather expected one or two of the first eggs of the clutch might be good, and determined to let her sit out to try the experiment; but I must say I was surprised to find, eventually, that *all the eggs were good and everyone hatched!* Another interesting point then remained to be seen—could she rear five young birds alone? The first day or two she was more than busy chasing youngsters No. 1 out of her way and feeding babies No. 2; to give her a chance, I removed No. 1, who were then quite capable of looking after themselves, so that she could give all her attention to No. 2 little ones. The task was too much for her, and they began to die. She might, perhaps, have reared one or two alone, but five were too many.

When young Parrakeets are being reared under ordinary circumstances, the hen is rarely seen out of the nest for the first days or a week: the cock usually goes to the nest to feed her, with food probably in a partly digested state, and she passes it on to the young ones. I am of opinion that the first week of young Parrakeet's life is its most critical stage, and it is at that time the cock's assistance in feeding is the most needed.

The brave little hen stuck to her task of rearing alone, though it was clearly above her capacity, and she seemed in a trembing state of exhaustion from it. This, of course, could not be allowed to continue; losing a hen of her value would never do; and the putting back of the cock (after two of the young had died, while another looked very weak) was the only chance of saving her and them. As he had never seen the eggs, much less the young, I did not know how he would take it. On his introduction there was a good deal of "chattering and wing-shaking," during which, I suppose, the hen assured him the youngsters were really his and his alone. Their behaviour was interesting and curious to observe, and he, after several cautious peeps, darted into the nest, came out again, and commenced feeding with his gallant little partner. I knew then all was well. The young were fed afterwards by both parents, and the "hungry cry" they seemed to utter before the cock was put back, ceased. The weak one referred to died a day or two later, being too far gone to profit by the cock's extra feeding; but the other two were eventually reared, and turned out cocks. All went well till they were nearly ready to leave the nest, when the old cock nearly killed them, and this time *before they left it.* The same reason again—the hen about commencing to lay another clutch, and the cock wanting the youngsters out of the way.

I may mention here that there are two nest-boxes at the hen's disposal, so it is not for the want of nesting accommodation that the cock acts as he does towards his offspring. He was, of course, caged up again, and the hen left to nurse and look after her two sons: and they really wanted all the care she could bestow upon them. They made fine progress; but more trouble was in store for them, for within a week the hen laid again. We were then with two young birds scarcely able to nibble seed or even green food; and the mother laying without the cock—taken away a week previously. What was to be done? I did not want her to lay and sit on unfertile eggs, as it was more than probable they would be, the cock having been removed before she was in laying condition; and on the other hand, I did not care to sacrifice ("bird in the hand" proverb again) the two young cocks for eggs that might not hatch. However, as the hen was continually uttering her "pairing-cry," and the cock answering with his pretty little song, never so frequently heard as in the breeding season, I determined to take the two young ones away and assist them as much as I could in feeding themselves—by giving them plenty of chickweed in seed, tender to nibble with their slender beaks, and bruising their seed a little—and to put the cock back with his mate again. She had then laid two eggs, which I marked; stopped laying for two or three days; then laid three more, and commenced sitting. With the above food the two young cocks did very well, and in a week were quite saved. The five eggs the hen was incubating gave the following result—Two (those marked) clear, and the other three all hatched. The young are just now about to leave the nest, and are one cock and two hens.

The object of these few notes is to mention the fertilizing of Parrakeets' eggs: to induce amateurs to give the eggs a trial should they ever be placed in the same position as I was, and not throw them away immediately as "sure to be barren," just because the cock was not with the hen till the last moment before she commenced laying. I believe there is a great difference between the fertilizing of Parrakeets' eggs and Fowls' eggs. On this subject one well known writer says: "The pairings of Parrakeets are repeated and long, frequent pairings being necessary to fertilize the eggs; quite the opposite to fowls, where the cock, in one operation, fertilizes a whole batch of eggs." With these remarks, from a reliable source, in mind, I was rather doubtful of the fertility of the two or three *last* eggs of the first clutch of five mentioned; but it is evident the necessary amount of pairing had taken place, for all hatched.

With the second clutch it was the contrary, the cock had to be ken away too soon, hence the first two eggs were clear; and d he not been put back to the hen when he was, the last three ld probably have been clear also. I presume from th ceding that when a sufficient amount of pairing has tak , the fertilizing extends to the end of the clutch, and *at least* eight days must have elapsed from the time the was taken away from the hen till she laid the fifth egg of all fertile. Her failing to bring up the young, alone, tends prove the necessity of the cock's assistance when the family is numerous and of a tender age.

Apart from the pleasing song of the cock, Redrumps have several other notes, each having a different meaning, and some of which are the following :

.—The "fright-note"—a piercing shrill note both birds hen frightened.

2nd.—The "pairing-note"—a low wheezing sound heard the hen only, and a sure sign she is coming on to lay.

rd.—The "excitement-note"—a chattering note both give, accom anied by the wings being thrown forward and shaken, when e birds are in a state of excitement and are discussing family matters between themselves.

4th.—The "bad-temper note"—an unwelcome sound—a cackling noise made mostly by the cock, which indicates his vicious state of feeling towards his youngsters, and precedes the maltreatment they will surely get after it.

By observing these few notes, anyone who has had a little experience with these handsome and interesting Parrakeets may know what is going on in their aviary and between themselves, although yards away and out of sight.

A little care and watching is, nevertheless, advisable, to ensure success in their breeding, for, as is the case with other birds (and sometimes human beings, too) they are at times prone to leave undone things they ought to do and to do things they ought not to do, and then failure is likely to ensue. An open eye, and matters put right in time, will save many a nestling.

THE TAIL OF THE INDIAN SHÂMA.

(Cittocincla tricolor).

By REGINALD PHILLIPPS.

In our Magazine for February, 1898, the Rev. H. D. A[illegible] gave us an interesting account of the Shâma; and [illegible] description as well as his illustration of the bird he repres[illegible] the outer tail-feathers as being white. In a foot-note at pag[illegible] I ventured to point out that, if these side feathers in Mr. Astley[illegible] bird are wholly white, it would seem to be a specimen o[illegible] *C. suavis* rather than *C. tricolor*.

A few months later, through the courtesy of Dr. Greene, I became possessed of the body of a fine Shâma 11½ inches long; and I think the details of the colouring of the several feather[illegible] of the tail—a tail of the typical Indian Shâma—mig[illegible] advantage be recorded in our pages.

The two central feathers were 6¾ inches long, and [illegible] wholly black.

The next feather, on each side, was 5⅝ inches lo[illegible] a[illegible] likewise wholly black.

Of the next, 4¾ inches long, measuring at the edge of the feather—nearly the whole of the inner and 3¼ inches of the outer web were black. In each feather, the line of demarcation between the black and the white is drawn in an irregular slanting direction, but in some much more so than in others. It is the basal end that is black; and in most of these feathers the black runs up the shaft beyond the line.

The fourth feather from the centre was 4 inches long, the black extending from the base 2¾ inches on the inner web and 2¼ inches on the outer.

Up No. 5, which was 3¼ inches long, the black extended 2½ inches and 2 inches respectively.

The outer feather, on each side, was 2½ inches long, of which the black claimed 1½ inches of the inner and 1¼ inches of the outer web.

Doubtless the measurements will differ somewhat in different specimens; even the corresponding feathers in this tail did not agree in every case; nevertheless these particulars relatively agree with a smaller tail which I have had by me for some years.

The immediate cause of the death of this noble bird, which had lived with its owner in this country about four years

I was informed, was an apoplectic seizure brought on by [illegible]r exertion or excitement whilst singing; but the actual caus[illegible]f the mischief was too generous living during the pairing seas[illegible]

THE SONGS OF TANAGERS.

By W. Nicholson.

The Scarlet Tanager in my possession was purchased when quite a young bird, and had not then attained his adult plumage. Whilst in this state, I never heard him utter anything except the familiar cry of "tak," which he only repeated when I [illegible] near his cage or was feeding him. At the end of last [illegible]mer, after he had moulted and assumed his scarlet and black [illegible]mage, he seemed to become more lively; and one day I heard [illegible]peculiar song, but was not sure which of my birds was the [illegible]uthor of it, until I had a peep into the bird-room and found it was the Scarlet Tanager, which I had previously thought to be a dummy as regards song. Certainly the song does not approach that of the Thrush, although I am inclined to think the Scarlet Tanager has pilfered a note or two of *his*. The song is, as far as I can render it: *Chip, chip, cheery; chip, chip, cheery; bo-peep, bo-peep; chirat, chirat; cheo, cheo; teeswit, teeswit, teeswit, teeswit; whizee, whizee, whizee.* This he repeats over and over again, particularly in the morning after he has had a feed, and at night before going to roost. Since he began he has improved a good deal, and his voice has become more subdued and the notes more distinct; but he has some good tutors, such as a Calandra Lark, Blackcap, Shâma, and Thrush, besides a miscellaneous collection of finches.

The Superb Tanager has always been fond of repeating his sharp chirp, and uttering a few harsh notes very similar to those of the Shâma, when the latter becomes excited; but only occasionally have I heard him utter a few sweeter notes, not of any long duration, and similar to that of the Indigo Bunting, as Dr. Butler describes it.

The Violet Tanager has a pretty little song, and is fond of repeating it somewhat after the style of an Avadavat; but still he occupies a back seat as compared with his companion. Unfortunately I cannot make his companion out; I think he is either *Euphonia gracilis* or *Chlorophonia viridis*, but I am not sure: at any rate he is the champion. On the morning of his arrival, directly I took him out of his travelling cage and put him into his permanent home, he commenced with his call-note, which is

identical with the Robin's note that my Robin answered him immediately, and now they frequently call to each other.

After he had been in my possession a week he began to [illegible] very pretty melody, which I can only compare to the [illegible] the notes are more connected and of longer duration. [illegible] end of singing, and is at it incessantly from morning [illegible] fact, he will sit on his food-dish and utter a few notes between the mouthfuls of food, and may be heard singing away when all his neighbours are having their afternoon snooze, and long after they have retired for the night.

I have also amongst my collection the Blue and Black, Striated, Crowned, and Chestnut-backed Tanagers; but have not had them long enough to allow me to speak about their abilities.

Since writing the foregoing my Crowned Tanager has shown a little inclination to tune up. Yesterday (October 12th) when all his neighbours were having a rehearsal, he commenced to give a song very similar to that of a Starling, and flapped his wings in the same manner, at the same time doing a sort of dance like the Bengalese, but at each bow he tapped the perch with his beak. He did not sing very long—but then, he is not in good plumage and minus his tail, therefore he may do better later on.

CORRESPONDENCE.

RED-HEADED FINCH.

SIR,—It may perhaps interest some of our members to hear that I have bred three hybrids from a cock Red-headed Finch and a hen Ribbon Finch. The young birds are two cocks and one hen, and were bred in an outdoor aviary without my knowledge, so that I was much surprised by their sudden appearance on September the 1st. The two males show their hybrid origin very distinctly, having the band of the male Ribbon Finch and also red (which is apparently increasing) on the head; the throat-band is also of the brick-red shade shown on the head of their male parent, not the more purple shade of the pure Ribbon Finch. I found, on searching for the nest, that the parents had driven out a pair of Zebra Finches from a box on a pole in the aviary, and built their own nest on the top of the Zebra Finches' nest—which latter contained five eggs.

I have owned the Red-head cock four years; and one mate of his own species and three or four Ribbon Finch wives, that have been supplied to him in succession, have all died egg-bound.

I moved to my present residence this Spring, so that my birds were not turned into their present aviary until quite the end of June; since then Saffron Finches, Parson Finches, Zebra Finches, Bengalese (two pairs) and this cross-mated pair have all bred in the aviary; and I have now a pair of

Ribbon Finches and a pair of Dwarf Finches sitting, besides, possibly, some others, as there is a thick hedge in the aviary. The Saffron Finches lost their young, and are, I think, breeding again. The other birds reared broods.

E. D. H. DA[illegible]

NESTING OF THE DIAMOND DOVE.

SIR,—A pair of Diamond Doves in my aviary have, this [illegible]uc[illegible] successfully reared two pairs of young birds, a fact that is perhaps worth recording in your columns, since the species has not very frequently been reared in English aviaries.

In the early part of the year, I had two pairs of Diamond Doves in an indoor aviary, and I found the hens very subject to egg-binding, in fact one of them succumbed to this complaint in April. In May, a pair were put into a garden aviary, where they soon commenced to build. They would not look at any artificial nesting-receptacles, but preferred to build as Nature had taught them—amongst the natural branches. The nest was built entirely of stiff pieces of grass; it was very small—about two inches in diameter—but well made and strong. The eggs were hatched in but twelve days, and the young grew very rapidly; in fact they were seen outside the nest when they were a fortnight old, and in less than three weeks from the time they hatched were able to fly as well as their parents (*a*).

The old birds went to nest again very soon after the young could fly, but they continued to feed the latter until they were quite able to look after themselves.

Young Diamond Doves are at first barred with brown, and have none of the white wing-spots; these, however, begin to appear when the birds are about a month old. The bright red skin round the eye is not developed until they are six or eight weeks old, when they are practically indistinguishable from their parents.

I think it is advisable to separate the sexes during the winter months and keep them out of *hearing* of one another, or else, even if the temperature be kept fairly high, the hens are apt to become egg-bound and die in the early spring.

I think it is improbable that Diamond Doves would breed successfully in an indoor aviary unless it were of a considerable size; few birds, in my opinion, do half so well indoors as out, in the summer.

Diamond Doves are, to my mind, the most charming of foreign Doves: they are hardy, very beautiful, of a decidedly cheerful disposition, and, if suitably housed, are free breeders in captivity.

D. SETH-SMITH.

THE MADAGASCAR WEAVER.

SIR,—I should be glad to know the experience of any members of the Avicultural Society in keeping the Madagascar Weaver (*Foudia madagascariensis*) with Waxbills and other small birds. Is he a safe or a dangerous bird? I should like to know their observations of his character, both in

(*a*) A third pair were hatched on October 9th, but the parents discontinued feeding them when the weather became chilly, and they lived only sixteen days.—D. S.-S.

cage and aviary—for I believe that many birds, which will maltreat others in small quarters, will not do so when they have ample room.

Last winter I tried two of these Weavers, newly-imported, in a fair cage with a pair of Nonpareils and a favourite old Gouldian Finch to remove them for persistent bullying. This summer I have outdoor aviary—the summer residence of my Waxbills and sma the Weaver (for only one survives) is in splendid feather; movements and flashing colour would be a great addition to beauty of the tribe in the aviary, but I have never dared to turn among them. Against another year, I should like to know the risk doing so.

O. E. Cresswell.

DRIED FLIES.

Some weeks ago I purchased a 5/- bag of "Zeke," in the h and belief that I had obtained a valuable addition to my birds' la Considerably to my surprise, I find that none of my birds will touch the flies when unmixed with other food, and that although they appea eaten when stirred into a mixture of sponge-cake, ants' eggs, and pres egg, the food seems to be less readily eaten than when it does not c flies. I have offered the flies to the following birds—Bulbuls (three sp Superb Tanager, Zosterops, Sugar-bird, Nightingale, Wheatear, Whit Blackcap, Garden Warbler, and Lesser Whitethroat—with the resul none of them will eat them, except, as it were by accident, when ked with other food.

I should be glad to know whether other aviculturists have had a similar experience, or whether I must consider my birds exceptionally dainty.

I find that "Zeke" contains a large proportion of dust and rubbish, and requires to be well sifted before use. It does not keep so well as ants' eggs, as a sort of mould rapidly forms on the outside of the bag.

I hardly think that "Zeke" is as much of a novelty as it is represented to be. I bought some dried flies in 1895 which had the same "ancient and fish-like smell," and must, I think, have been obtained from the same source (*b*).

Horatio R. Fillmer.

SWALLOWS IN CAGES.

Sir,—I am glad to see Mr. Astley's protest against keeping Swallows in cages. I have long thought of making the same protest myself. I do not think anyone who keeps a Swallow in a cage can really care about birds.

F. G. Dutton.

(*b*) As a rule I have mixed 'Zeke' with my soft food and have found it all eaten by Pileated and English Jays, Blackbird, Bluebird, Thrush, Crested Mynah, Nuthatch, Liothrix, Madeiran Chaffinch, and all kinds of Weavers. Unmixed it has been eaten dry by Pileated and English Jays, Nightingale, Bluebird, Liothrix, Superb Tanager (which however is not a great insect-eater), Scarlet Tanager, and Crested Mynah. It should be kept in tins, when it keeps well. All dried insects crumble by friction and thus produce insect-dust, but this is not unwholesome. 'Zeke' has been imported in small consignments for six or seven years.—A. G. B.

SIR,—I am so glad to see the protest in the *Avicultural Magazine* against keeping Swallows in cages. It seems a very needless cruelty. An imprisoned Lark is also a sad sight, in my opinion. I should like to see our Society set its face against the confinement of birds so unsuited to cage life.

E. E. WES[illegible]

SIR,—Allow me to support, very earnestly, Mr. Astley's repr[illegible] ed Swallows. THOS. "[illegible]

SOME FALLACIES.

SIR,—(1). We are commonly told by our "guides" that Australi[illegible] rimson Finches are the most dangerous of birds; that to put them into a[illegible] iary with other birds means, for the latter, murder and sudden death. [illegible] assure our gentle readers, from a large and long experience, that th[illegible] so. Crimson Finches behave in a most exemplary manner in a mixed [illegible]ection. I have a pair at the present moment in one of my large aviaries, they behave admirably. Again, we are told that the male Crimson [illegible]h always makes it a point of honour to slay his wife as speedily as [illegible]. I again assert that this is arrant nonsense. I have had many [illegible] and they never offered to fight. I have a pair now, and they are like [illegible]n Elizabeth and Leicester, "When you see one the other is not far [illegible]." I can only suppose that in the solitary case where a Crimson Finch [illegible]lered his wife, he was feeling desperately ill; and this solitary case has [illegible] quoted by subsequent authorities as the normal state of things. [illegible] enough, I shall be told that my Crimson Finches are the exception [illegible]prove the rule; but all I can say is that I have had many exceptions.

[illegible]2). Dr. Butler made the astounding statement in the *Feathered World*, [illegible] Common Waxbills are so delicate that he cannot keep them alive. [illegible]y, I should say that there is no hardier bird imported. I have had my [illegible]ent pair for years. I don't think you could kill them by fair means—I [illegible]dn't. I don't say what Dr. Butler could do.

(3). "Paddy rice is essential to keep Pintailed Nonpareils alive," is [illegible]her w[illegible]e saw we are asked to believe. My Pintails never see paddy [illegible]hey are in perfect health and condition. I never find any [illegible]n keeping them; nor does my friend Mr. Oates, of Leeds—I [illegible] again, we are "exceptions."

[illegible]). Once more—"The proper food for Tanagers." We have had the [illegible]r part of some numbers of our Magazine devoted to this question. [illegible]drous diets are recommended—no wonder the Tanagers refused to live. [illegible]e gentleman talked about the ripe bananas of Pernambuco. Well, my [illegible]nagers do very well on bananas out of Leeds Market, and are thankful [illegible] them. I will undertake to keep a Tanager with the greatest ease on [illegible]na and Abrahams' egg and boiled rice for any reasonable time. I have [illegible]perb and Violet Tanagers, and I had Reds, but I sold them as they were [illegible]ch murderous wretches—(but that is another story). So far from Tanagers [illegible]ing delicate, I know of two friends who have, at the present moment, [illegible]perb and Violet Tanagers in outdoor aviaries (October 17th). Of course, [illegible]y bird will die if you do not feed it properly, even a Tanager! (*c*)

C. D. FARRAR.

(*c*) We have again been compelled to excise a small portion of Mr. Farrar's letter, [illegible]hich was calculated to hurt the feelings of a highly esteemed member.—ED.

In the foregoing letter, as in previous communications, the Rev. C. D. Farrar assumes that where his observations differ from those of other writers one or the other must be wrong. This is an entirely unnecessary assumption, as all aviculturists know how widely the experience of two observers may differ as to the habits and character of the same species. For instance, Dr. Butler found the Parson Finch intolerably spiteful in his aviary, while I have kept that bird for years in mine without mishap, and have reared many young ones in a small aviary filled with defenceless species. Neither Dr. Butler nor I doubt the correctness of the other's observations.

It is a pity that Mr. Farrar will persist in thus assuming that different observations are necessarily contradictory, but unfortunately he is not satisfied with that but goes a step further, and claims, as a matter of course, that when he differs from others he alone is right and the statements of others untrue. By taking up this position he prejudices many against his views, needlessly irritates his opponents, and renders it difficult to conduct a friendly discussion with him. I feel bound to remind him that writers in this Magazine are expected to express themselves courteously and with consideration for others, and that its columns will not be allowed to become an arena for ill-mannered controversies.

After this introduction I will reply to Mr. Farrar's "Fallacies" *seriatim*.

(1). Like other birds, Crimson Finches doubtless differ greatly in disposition, yet most observers find them very dangerous to other birds. Mr. Wiener says, "In the aviary the Crimson Finch is one of the most combative of small birds, especially at breeding-time." (Cassell's "Cage and Cage Birds," p. 370). Dr. Russ says, "A male in my bird-room is sociable, yet at times spiteful towards small birds." (Butler's "Foreign Finches in Captivity," p. 147). Dr. Simpson, quoted by Dr. Butler, says, "I know of no small birds which equal these for spitefulness," and Dr. Butler adds, "Mr. Abrahams gives them the same character." My own pair were so spiteful that neither could be trusted with other birds, and one day the cock attacked the hen and nearly killed her. On the other hand, Mr. Todd found the species peaceable (*Avicultural Magazine*, Vol. iv., p.). I think the evidence in favour of its dangerous nature so greatly preponderates that it is the duty of a writer on aviculture (even the despised "Guide") to warn the novice against it. Recently the Crimson has become comparatively common, and I shall be glad if others who have kept it will record their experience of its disposition.

(2). Dr. Butler will no doubt deal with this point; but everyone knows that the Grey Waxbill is not usually delicate, and I do not think that Dr. Butler can have stated the contrary (*d*).

(3). Paddy rice is certainly not essential for fully acclimatised and tailed Nonpareils—in fact they often cease to care for it. But it is a

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(*d*) Mr. Farrar's experience of this and other birds is based upon a large garden aviary with plenty of cover. In such an aviary I will venture to say that the natural characteristics of birds are less likely to become obtrusive than in an indoor aviary of moderate dimensions—say five yards in length by half that in width—nevertheless, I always unwise to crow too loudly: his experience of Scarlet Tanagers tallies with that of other aviculturists, and he may have to change his views with regard to Crimson Finches. Grey Waxbills, when kept indoors, live longer in small than in large aviaries. I do not remember to have made any general statement. I mentioned my own experience.—A. G. B.

help in getting freshly imported birds to live, especially if it be given after steeping in water—and anyone who buys unacclimatised Pintails would be very unwise to neglect its use, if he can procure it. If Mr. Farrar alludes to newly imported Pintails, when he says he "never has any difficulty in keeping them," he has either been most unusually fortunate, or has discovered some secret as to treatment which all of us would like to learn. Dr. Butler has recently recommended oats as a substitute.

(4). I do not know what fallacy, real or imaginary, Mr. Farrar is attacking. Everyone knows, and has known for many years, that [illegible] can be kept quite easily on a diet of fruit and any good soft food. Has no modern writer has asserted the contrary?

HORATIO R. FILL[illegible]

THE LONG-TAILED COMBASOU.

SIR,—I note that the reports of the last Palace Show speak of Mr. Fulljames' Long-tailed Combasou as the first imported. This is an error. Some two years ago I had one, and I made a note of it at the time, in the Magazine; and I asked if anyone had ever before seen what I called "a Combasou in full plumage?" But no one took any notice, so I was snuffed out. Now I find it was a great rarity (*e*).

C. D. FARRAR.

"A MISERABLE YOUNG CUCKOO."

SIR,—If Mr. D. Seth-Smith, who reported on the British Birds at the last Crystal Palace Show, had seen my Cuckoo when I bought him, he might justly have called him a miserable young Cuckoo—his breast-bone was almost through his skin,-and he was so weak that he could not fly on to a perch a foot from the aviary floor. Seeing the wretchedness of the poor bird, I made him a hay nest in a wicker basket and fed him on chopped mealworms with my fingers. I had him near to me at night, so that I could conveniently feed him as soon as it was light in the morning; he got on wonderfully well and can now fly about the aviary.

My object in caging him for the Show was not to get a prize (as I knew his rough plumage would debar him from that) but to give the public a chance of seeing a Cuckoo—and very interested they seemed in him. His cage was a small one, but I don't think this would cause him any misery, as he very rarely stirs from his perch, although he is in an aviary about 15 feet square and 18 feet high.

I will admit this much—it *is folly* to keep such a bird, simply because it gives one so little pleasure. Mine never utters a sound except when he is fighting for his food: his noise then is very much like the hissing of a Goose. He is very lazy, and never bathes. In fact, I have come to the conclusion that the Cuckoo is a dirty, dull, uninteresting bird, and hardly deserves a place in the National British Bird and Mule Club's List; and should anyone feel inclined to buy one, my advice is "Don't."

A. JONES.

(*e*) The Long-tailed Combasou, belonging to Mr. Fulljames, is distinguished from the Common Combasou not only by the length of its tail but by the colour of its beak, which is dark even when in full plumage. For this reason no careful observer could possibly imagine the bird to be a mere sport, as Mr. Farrar seems to have thought his was. Can Mr. Farrar's bird have been something different after all?—ED.

ROSE-COLOURED PASTORS.

SIR,—Referring to the report on the Doves and Soft-billed Birds at the P[illegible]e Show, the pair of Rose-coloured Pastors were adult birds (Class 64). It [illegible]s surprising to me to find how quickly these birds change their [illegible]. When I entered them for the Show they were a lovely rose colour, [illegible]hen bought for me (with a number of other birds) by a friend, [illegible] Calcutta bazaars, in April last. Just before the Show, they [illegible]ch[illegible] and in two or three days the lovely rose tint had quite gone, [illegible] lo[illegible]d quite different birds, being a grey colour, and having the [illegible]ace of being young birds.

[illegible]he rarest of my nineteen exhibits at the Palace Show was a pair of [illegible]dous Honey-eaters (V.H.C.) in fine plumage, shown in a very large [illegible]. Only once before have I ever seen these birds exhibited at the Palace: a p[illegible] was exhibited at the February Show, and took first prize in a large class of 31 entries, including Toucans, Shâmas, and Blue-cheeked Barbets—I exhibited a very fine Blue-cheeked Barbet (V.H.C.) in this class—this year all the above were put before the Honey-eaters.

I had four of these birds, quite tame, and they would feed from my hand. A few days since, the aviary door, by some means, was left open, and two escaped; these flew about my garden and looked like Cuckoos on the wing. The next day I put out a cage with food in it, and one went in and allowed me to walk up and close the door; the other, after flying about for two days, disappeared. It being so tame, I hope someone caught it, so that it escaped the claws of some marauding cat.

JAMES B. HOUSDEN.

BIRD-BOARDERS.

SIR,—Perhaps some of our members who have boarded-out cage-birds will kindly inform me if the following charges, per week, are unusually high: Song-birds, single, 8d. to 9d., and pairs 1/-; large species 1/- to 1/6 each.

My birds have been kept in splendid condition at these rates, but some of my friends think them excessive.

"ENQUIRER."

CLASSES FOR COMMON WAXBILLS, &c.

SIR,—In reading Dr. Simpson's account of the Foreign Finches at Palace Show, I regret to find that he thinks it unlikely the Committee of the F. B. E. I. will consider it worth their while to provide these classes (by which I presume he means Classes 50 and 53) at any future Show. I, for one, hope the Committee will provide them, as I believe they will become two of the best-filled in the Show. It will take time for them to get known. I believe they came as a surprise to many owners of common birds, and the consequence was they had not time to get their birds into show condition and provide suitable cages. I believe that if the Green Avadavat, African Fire Finch, Lavender Finch, and Cordon Bleu were transferred to Class 50 it would give more satisfaction. I hope other members will give us their ideas.

W. OAKEY.

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ly upon you for a good thing"—FREEMAN, Esq., 10, Rochester Terrace, Edinburgh:
t some birds from you, they all turned out first-class."—METCALF, Esq., 30, Lennox
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ction, and are now in the pink of condition and song; I never in all my experience
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ps, be allowed to say that MASCHKE, of Islington, has a very happy method of pack-
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g and obtrusive label of instructions for safe conduct, which is of the greatest
e."—BERTLING, Esq., 43, Colfe Road, Forest Hill (Member Avicultural): "Have had
birds from you, am well satisfied with them."—LAYCOCK, Esq., Newton Abbot:
irinian nightingale sang splendidly as soon as I put him into my aviary."—DAVIES,
New Street, Stourport: "Birds you sent me are all alive and doing splendidly, they
mired by all who see them."—CHARLEY, Esq., Coventry: "Many thanks for the
t attention paid to the order."—Miss HUTH, Popular Cottage, Willingale, Ongar:
Virginian nightingale is the best I ever had. It arrived last night, and burst out in-
g this morning when I hung it up in the sun. I am really delighted with it, and I can
say I have never seen or bought a bird in such splendid health and condition. Many
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