

edly seen" on the way south from the Aleutians is supposed to have been *Cymochorea melana* (Bp.) Coues. In the same course, for nearly a thousand miles "scarcely a day passed but a Petrel with the belly white" was seen; this is identified as *Fregatta grallaria*, not impossibly correctly, though the identification of most Petrels on the wing is too difficult to make this case satisfactory.

Colymbus adamsi and *C. pacificus* are both given, as full species, and as occurring besides *C. torquatus* and *C. arcticus*.

Of *Alcidæ*, no fewer than fifteen representatives are given, *Synthliboramphus wurmezusume* not included. The most important point in this connection is made in the rediscovery and perfect identification of *Brachyrhamphus kittlitzii* of Brandt, long a doubtful bird to American ornithologists, no specimen being known in this country. Mr. Nelson took one in breeding plumage in the spring of 1877, at Ounalaska, and afterward another was secured by Mr. Turner further west in the Aleutian chain. We have had the pleasure of handling Mr. Nelson's specimen, among many other of his birds kindly submitted to our inspection. It is certainly distinct from any Auk known to us when our monograph of the family was prepared, and we have no doubt of the accuracy of the identification which has been made. A colored plate will probably be published in another connection.

What general criticism we might pass upon this notable paper would add nothing to its value, and may be gathered from what has preceded. Obscure as it is upon some points, and much as it lacks of detailed information respecting the nesting and eggs of sundry notable Arctic birds, we cannot be too thankful for what we are here given of novelty, variety, and interest. We should not omit to add that it is illustrated with four colored plates, executed by Mr. Ridgway, representing *Motacilla ocularis*, *Lanius cristatus*, *Euryorhynchus pygmaeus*, and *Ciceronia pusilla*, all of life size and equally handsome. — E. C.

Cory's Beautiful and Curious Birds.—The recent appearance of Part VII completes the work, which consists of twenty plates, with accompanying text. Ten of the plates relate to as many species of Birds of Paradise; others include the Dodo, the Kiwi (*Apteryx australis*), the Lyre Bird, the Ruff, the Spotted Bower Bird, the Black-headed Plover or Crocodile Bird, and the Sacred Ibis, besides such American species as the Great Auk, the Labrador Duck, and the California Condor. The plates, in part drawn and lithographed by the well-known bird-artist Smidt, are superb illustrations of some of the most striking forms of bird-life. While not, from the nature of the subjects, of high scientific value, it is a work of art and natural history combined, and as such will be welcomed by lovers of birds and fine books. It is dedicated to Mr. J. A. Allen.—W. B.

Stejneger and Ridgway on Birds of the Commander Islands.—In a letter* dated Bering Island, September 30, 1882, addressed to Prof. Baird,

* Contributions to the History of the Commander Islands. No. 1. Notes on the Natural History, including Descriptions of New Cetaceans. By Leonhard Stejneger. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1883, pp. 58-89. July 21, 1883.

Dr. Stejneger has given a preliminary account of his journey to and work at Bering Island, a locality of special interest as being the point where Steller, a century ago, passed some time in studying the fauna, and where he wrote his celebrated memoir on the northern sea cow (*Rhytina gigas*) and some of the large marine Carnivora of Bering Sea. It is therefore a locality of historic interest, as well as one offering great promise of remains of the extinct sea cow, many of which Dr. Stejneger obtained. At the date of his letter he had already devoted some months to the study of the natural history of the island, and his narrative relates to the fauna in general. Besides treating at length of some of the more interesting of the marine mammals, and including many notes on the invertebrates, the narrative contains much that relates to the birds. Special but unsuccessful search was made for the Great Northern Sea-Eagle (*Thalassaëtus pelagicus*) and Pallas's Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax perspicillatus*), there being "no hope whatever of getting a specimen of the latter, and very little of obtaining the former from Bering Island," their assigned habitat. The Cormorant, he states, appears to have been exterminated by the natives some thirty years ago. Dr. Stejneger, however, discovered there a large Sea-Eagle, which he believes must be new, and which Mr. Ridgway has since described (*Haliaëtus hypoleucus* Stejn. MS.) as such from specimens obtained by Stejneger. He also obtained several Passerine birds and Sandpipers believed by him to be new, and three of the former have now been described as new by Mr. Ridgway, as noted below.

Dr. Stejneger collected sixty-one species of birds from Bering Island, while ten others were observed. A number of additional species were obtained at Petropaulski. The ornithological matter in the present paper occupies pp. 65-74, besides passing mention of birds elsewhere. In addition to notes at some length on the more interesting species, considerable space is devoted to observations on the change of color in the Ptarmigans (*Lagopus albus**), but no satisfactory solution of the problem is reached.

Mr. Ridgway, † upon examination of Dr. Stejneger's material, has described the following species as new: (1) *Haliaëtus hypoleucus* Stejn., MS.; (2) *Acrocephalus dybowskii* Stejn., MS.; (3) *Anorthura pallescens* Stejn., MS., of the size and proportions of *A. alasensis*, but "in coloration entirely different"; (4) *Hirundo saturata* Stejn., MS., "similar to *H. erythrogastra*, but much more richly colored beneath," etc. For a species described and doubtfully referred to *Anthus japonicus* Tem. and Schl., is proposed the name "*A. stejnegeri*, sp. nov., if new."—J. A. A.

* We are informed by the author that what is here called *Lagopus "albus"* turns out to be a form of *L. mutus*; while *Leucosticte "brunneinucha"* (p. 71) is a slip of the pen for *L. griseinucha*.

† Descriptions of some Birds supposed to be undescribed, from the Commander Islands and Petropaulovski, collected by Dr. Leonhard Stejneger, U. S. Signal Service, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1883, pp. 90-96. July 21, 1883.