

flavipes, until we come to the really notable departure in this particular as found in the sternum of the Sandpiper which is the subject of this letter.*

If you will kindly grant me a few more lines of your valuable space, I would like to add here a few supplemental notes in reference to the pterylography of the genus *Sphyrapicus*. It will be remembered that in the April (1888) issue of 'The Auk,' I figured this character for a Woodpecker of that genus, and showed how the 'saddle-tract' resembled that pteryla in most Passeres. This was perfectly true for all the examples then at my command, but since then considerable more material has come under my observation, and in some individuals of *Sphyrapicus v. nuchalis*, I find the pattern of the dorsal tracts in their pterylography, quite Picine in character, while several individuals prettily show intermediate steps approaching the pattern of the specimen I figured in my former letter on this point, alluded to above. In a letter of mine published in 'The Auk' in July, 1887, I showed how widely different in form the skulls of two birds of the same species might be, and I am now inclined to think that similar departures may occasionally be met with, where the pterylography may vary within certain limits for the same species. This would appear to be the case anyway in the Woodpecker about which I have been speaking.

Very respectfully yours,

R. W. SHUFELDT.

Fort Wingate, New Mexico,
March 27, 1888.

NOTES AND NEWS.

HENRY JAMES STOVIN PRYER, a corresponding member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died in Yokohama, Japan, where he has resided for many years, on February 17, 1888, from bronchial pneumonia. He was born in London, near Finsbury Square, June 10, 1850, the youngest son of Thomas Pryer, a London solicitor. He went to China in 1871, but shortly after he settled in Japan, where he engaged in mercantile business, devoting all his spare time to collecting natural history objects and to studying the butterflies and birds of that country.

* Since writing the above, I have received a valued communication from Mr. J. A. Allen, who has kindly looked into this matter for me, and reports that he finds the "two-notched" sternum in *Totanus ochropus*. I further learn that the sternum of this species is figured in Mr. Seebohm's recent work on the 'Charadriidæ,' but note with surprise that he makes so light of such an admirable generic character. This convinces me more than ever, that the genus *Rhyacophilus* should be restored.—R. W. S.

To ornithologists he is best known as Capt. Blakiston's collaborator in the various annotated lists of Japanese birds published in 'The Ibis' and the 'Transactions' of the Asiatic Society of Japan between the years 1878 and 1882, Mr. Pryer chiefly contributing the notes and the material relating to the birds of the Middle Island, while Capt. Blakiston furnished the data from the North Island. These publications mark a great advance in Japanese ornithology, and justly serve as the basis for all future investigations.

In the prosecution of his ornithological and other researches, Mr. Pryer visited the Bonin and Liu Kiu Islands, bringing home from the latter several new and highly interesting species which have been described by Mr. Seeböhm. During a visit to Northeast Borneo he explored the famous caves of Gomanton, where he procured specimens of the edible birds'-nests and of the Swiftlets themselves (*Collocalia fuciphaga*), and in a most interesting paper, published in the P. Z. S., 1884, pp. 532-538, * related his experiences there, and explained the mode of construction and composition of these nests (see also below).

At one time he gave up business for an appointment under the Japanese government, and superintended the arrangement of the zoölogical collection in the museum of the Education Department. While in that service he travelled about in the southern part of the country attended by native assistants collecting for that institution. He soon returned to mercantile business again, and to private collecting and study; but he was always ready to afford assistance and advice to his former employers, and the success which attended the National Museum, as well as the one he had been instrumental in setting on foot in the zoölogical way, is no doubt much due to his aid.

A friend, to whom we owe much of the information embodied in the above sketch of Mr. Pryer's career, describes him as being of a wiry nature, capable of withstanding fatigue and excessive heat, though not robust, and as to his other qualities our correspondent quotes the following from the 'Japan Daily Mail' of February 20:—"Mr. Pryer had earned no small distinction as a naturalist. Earnest and unassuming, he cultivated knowledge for its own sake, and in the comparative retirement which he courted for the better pursuit of his work, he never lost the geniality and gentle kindness so often found in loving students of nature."

In recognition of his meritorious work as a zoölogist in Japan, Mr. Pryer was elected a member of the Entomological Society of London in 1867, a corresponding member of the Zoölogical Society, London, in 1878, and of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1883.

Mr. Pryer's name will always be honorably associated with the history of Japanese ornithology, and his death is a great loss to those who were specially engaged in that branch and who had the good fortune to profit by his correspondence.—L. S.

ANOTHER corresponding member of the A. O. U. has recently passed away, viz. Dr. Modest N. Bogdanow, who on March 4-16, died in St.

* A short abstract is to be found in the 'Standard Natural History,' IV, p. 438.

Petersburg only forty-seven years old. He was a Professor Ordinarius of Zoölogy at the Imperial University in St. Petersburg, and a curator of the Zoölogical museum of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in that city.

From 1867 he has been a very prolific writer, and gained for himself an enviable reputation as a bright and painstaking ornithologist. His careful methods, scientific accuracy, and keen power of distinguishing cannot be too highly eulogized in these days of slipshod ornithology, and his influence in these respects upon the younger school of Russian ornithologists is evident on every hand. Unfortunately most of his papers were written in Russian, and are hence inaccessible to most students outside of the great Eastern Empire, but his last work,* destined to be the crowning work of his life, was published in both Russian and French. Of this, however, up to his death only the first part has been published, but it is to be hoped that enough material may be found among his papers to insure the completion of this invaluable synopsis of the avifauna of more than one half the circumboreal region. Of his many other works we will only mention his 'Birds of the Caucasus,' and his admirable memoir on the Russian Shrikes.

Bogdanow was a trinomialist and a 'splitter,' which with his conscientious and thorough research make his writings particularly useful. The data furnished by him can in most cases be utilized directly, and with him for a guide over unfamiliar ground one feels comparatively safe. Where one's material and specimens give out, Bogdanow's statements are usually of such a nature as to help one out of the difficulty. How fortunate, if we could say the same of most that is written and printed about birds nowadays!—L. S.

WHILE the wearing of dead birds, or portions of them, for decorative purposes has immensely declined in this country during the last two years, and consequently the destruction of our native birds for such purposes, the barbaric trade in these decorations has by no means come to an end, as witness the following statistics of an auction sale held in London, March 21, of the present year. In a "Public Sale" list of Hale & Son, of Mincing Lane, London, handed us by a friend, we find advertised for sale on the above-named date, birds' skins, plumes, wings, and feathers, representing in the aggregate more birds than are contained in all the ornithological collections of this country, including private collections as well as public museums—in other words, *hundreds of thousands*, in this single auction sale! Besides about 16,000 *packages* and *bundles* of 'Osprey,' Peacock, Argus and other Pheasants, Ducks, "Paddy," and Heron feathers, we note several thousand *mats* and *hand-screens*, while under the head of "various bird skins," we figure up between 7,000 and 8,000 Parrots, shipped mainly from Bombay and Calcutta, but including some from South America; about 1000 Impeyan and 500 Argus Pheasants; about 1000 Woodpeckers; 1450 "Penguins" (Auks and Grebes?); some 14,000 Quails, Grouse and Partridges; about 4000 Snipes and Plovers; about 7000 Starlings, Jays, and

* *Conspectus Avium Imperii Rossici.*

Magpies; over 12,000 Hummingbirds; about 5000 Tanagers; 6000 Blue Creepers and 1500 other Creepers (probably family Cœrebidæ); several hundred *each* of Hawks, Owls, Gulls, Terns, Ducks, Ibises, Finches, Orioles, Larks, Toucans, Birds of Paradise, etc.; several thousand each of Wrens, Manakins, Bee-eaters, Kingfishers, Doves and Pigeons; "1493 Swallows," in one lot; and about 12,000 are scheduled under "Black Heads," "Black and White," "Pink and Black," "Grey and Black," "Various," etc. The number distinctly scheduled as *skins* reached nearly or quite 100,000, while the number represented by the 16,000 or more "packages," and "bundles," and the 3500 mats and hand-screens must amount to at least as many more.

As such sales are not of unfrequent occurrence, and doubtless occur in other large cities as well as in London, the wonder is that the supply continues. The traffic, if much longer sustained, cannot fail to have a marked effect in depopulating the countries supplying these sales of their bird life. What a bloody Moloch is fashion! and how thoughtlessly otherwise intelligent and tender-hearted women obey her behests!

Since the above was written, the following has appeared in a recent number of the 'American Field,' which forms a fitting addendum to the foregoing: "Last year the trade in birds for women's hats was so enormous that a single London dealer admitted that he had sold 2,000,000 of small birds of every kind and color. At one auction in one week there were sold 6000 birds of paradise, 5000 Impeyan Pheasants, 400,000 Hummingbirds, and other birds from North and South America, and 360,000 feathered skins from India."

We have been permitted to copy the following from a recent letter of the late H. Pryer, which may be of interest to the readers of 'The Auk':

"I think I sent you my paper on the Borneo Edible Birds'-nests? All the ornithologists and chemists have been down on me for saying that it is composed of a peculiar sort of *Alga* which grows in damp places in the caves at 300 to 400 feet elevation above the sea, but I have just received news that I am perfectly right and every one else for the past seventy years is wrong! They said the nest was made of the bird's own saliva, but Divers, who has analyzed the nest and *algæ*, finds in the latter a very peculiar gum, and that the nest is formed of this gum, mixed with the saliva of the bird. Divers was one of the strongest of my opponents, but now he finds I am right. I must say, however, that in the face of the weighty evidence brought against me I began to doubt the evidence of my own senses, although I was perfectly certain that a little pair of birds not bigger than the top joint of my thumb could not secrete several quarts of saliva three times a year to build their nest with."

Mr. C. B. CORY is still continuing his ornithological explorations in the West Indies, he having recently sent Mr. E. B. Gallenger to the Grand Bahama, while Mr. Clark P. Streater, formerly of California, has been engaged for an extensive collecting tour in the hitherto neglected portions of the Antilles. Mr. C. J. Maynard has just returned from an

extended exploration, in Mr. Cory's interest, of Nassau, Andros, Inagua, and the Caymans, collecting large series of the birds of these islands, among which are some novelties.

A MEETING of the several Audubon Monument Committees of New York and vicinity was held at Columbia College, May 22, at which reports of progress were made. The work of collecting funds for the proposed monument is thus far not meeting with quite the success hoped, although there is as yet little reason for discouragement. Those who intend to contribute should not hold back, but promptly send their remittances either to the general treasurer, Dr. N. L. Britton, Columbia College, New York City, or to the treasurers of the several sub-committees, as they may prefer. The treasurer of the A. O. U. Committee, Mr. William Dutcher (51 Liberty Street, New York City), reports the following contributions received (up to June 11) since the publication of the statement made in the April number of 'The Auk': Chapter No. 382, Agassiz Ass'n, by H. S. Fullerton, Sec., \$2.00; L. S. Foster, 1.00; C. K. Averill, Jr., 2.00; Cash, Phila., Pa., 5.00; F. C. Browne, 2.00; L. B. Adams, 2.00; B. F. Gault, 5.00; Miss A. S. Van Cortlandt, 2.00; F. Bond, 1.00; N. S. Goss, 5.00; J. H. Sage, 10.00; "Colorado Springs," 5.00; R. Deane, 5.00; W. F. Hendrickson, 1.00; A. H. Hawley, 1.00; Prof. Alfredo Dugès, 5.00; W. C. Avery, M. D., 5.00; "Percy," 5.00; W. H. Foote, 5.00; Adolf Bachofen von Echt, 10.00; Dr. R. Blasius, 8.00; José C. Zeledon, 10.00; Anastasio Alfaro, 10.00. Total, \$107.00.