

Vernacular Names of Birds.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK'.

Dear Sirs:—The subject of vernacular names of birds is not of supreme importance in ornithology, but, since it has been opened, I hope I may be allowed to make a little suggestion. First let me say, though I am well aware that Dr. Allen's views need no endorsement from me, that I am in entire accord with them in the matter of hyphenating, and this in spite of a tendency toward purism which should perhaps lead me to stand by the dictionaries and Dr. Doran. It has always seemed to me that the words 'song,' 'tree,' 'swamp,' etc., as used in connection with the names of sparrows are as truly adjectival in sense as if they were actual adjectives instead of nouns, and I can see no good reason why the combinations should be differentiated in form from such names as 'chipping sparrow' and 'white-throated sparrow.' The case of 'quail-dove' is different, of course, as are those of 'water-thrush' and 'meadow-lark.' Personally I should have preferred 'meadow-lark,' 'night-hawk, etc., reserving the single-word form for the more familiar compounds of the word 'bird,' but I cheerfully follow the A. O. U. in vernacular as well as in the scientific names. (There is just one bit of sentimentalism in the list, which I cannot countenance: I refuse to call a snow bunting a 'snowflake.' I also prefer, in conversation, to speak of white-bellied instead 'white-breasted' nuthatches.)

But, to come to the point of this communication, it seems to me that a much more serious difficulty than that of the hyphens is the lack of qualifying or what I may call 'specific' and 'subspecific' adjectives for the names of certain birds like the chickadee, the horned lark, the red-poll, and the towhee. Why should we not have full vernacular names for *Parus atricapillus*, *Otocoris alpestris*, *Acanthis linaria*, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*, etc., which will tell exactly what species and subspecies is referred to in any given case without the help of the scientific name? We should not always have to use the complete name, of course, but it would be convenient to have one to use when needed and one that is sanctioned by the Union. I hope that this matter may be considered by the Committee on Nomenclature when the next edition of the Check-List is prepared.

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A Rare Work on American Ornithology.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sirs:—Captain Thomas Brown's folio 'Illustrations of the American Ornithology of Wilson and Bonaparte' is such a scarce book that you may deem it worthy of a notice in your pages. By a careful

search I have been able to trace only three copies of it. One of these is in the library of the Zoölogical Society of London, another in the possession of Professor Alfred Newton, the third (a very imperfect copy) in a private library in Tarrytown, N. Y. The latter is the one that was twice sold at auction in New York City, Nov. 23, 1896, and Feb. 23, 1897.

In 1831 the first European edition of Wilson and Bonaparte's 'American Ornithology' was published in Edinburgh, without plates, forming four volumes of Constable's 'Miscellany' and edited by Professor Jameson. That the 'Illustrations' of Capt. Brown were originally intended to accompany the text of the Constable 'Miscellany' edition is clearly shown by contemporary notices. In a notice of Jameson's edition in the 'Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal' (Jameson's), July-Sept., 1831, p. 409, we read: "As a proof of the interest the work [Jameson's edition] is exciting, we may add, that the plates of the original works are re-engraving and publishing. *Three editions* are now in progress, one in folio, another in royal octavo, a third the size of the Edinburgh [Jameson's] edition of Wilson and Bonaparte, and as stated in the advertisement, intended to bind up with that work." In an advertisement dated April, 1831, issued with some copies of the first volume of Jameson's Wilson & Bonaparte, as well as in a critical notice of the first part of Capt. Brown's 'Illustrations' which appeared in the 'London Literary Gazette' for October 8, 1831, the 'Illustrations' are spoken of as forming a companion to the letter-press of Jameson's edition of Wilson & Bonaparte. From the Constable advertisement we further learn that the first part of the 'Illustrations' was published in April, 1831, and consisted of five plates; price, medium folio, colored, 15 s.; plain, 10 s.; a few in elephant folio, colored, one guinea. "To be completed in ten parts, each containing . . . five plates." The work finally exceeded by much the limits at first assigned to it, the plates amounting to 124 at their completion in 1835, when an engraved title-page was issued, which I transcribe from the copy in the library of the Zoölogical Society:

"[Illustrations | of the | American Ornithology | of | Alexander Wilson
| and | Charles Lucian Bonaparte | Prince of Musignano | With the addition
of | Numerous recently discovered Species | and Representations of |
The Whole Sylva | of | North America. | By | Captain Thomas Brown.
| FLS. MWS. MKS. MPS. | Late President of the Royal Physical Society.
| &c. &c. &c. | Edinburgh. | Frazer & Co. 54 North Bridge | William
Curry, Junr. & Co. Dublin | & Smith, Elder & Co. 65 Cornhill | London.
| MDCCCXXXV. | Designed & engraved by James Turvey." Folio.

Collation: Engraved title-leaf, engraved dedication-leaf, pp. i-iii [Systematic Index], pll. col. I-CXXIV. Plate XCVI. is erroneously numbered CVI. (rectified in the Index) and 68 of the plates have numbers gummed on after printing (these also are properly allocated in the Index).

The Tarrytown copy, which I have also had the privilege of seeing, although very defective (lacking 37 plates, title-page, dedication and index), is interesting inasmuch as it retains one of the original brown

paper wrappers, probably belonging to Part I. The title as printed on this wrapper differs from the definitive engraved title, and reads as follows:

"Illustrations | of the | American Ornithology | of | Alexander Wilson, | and Charles Lucian Bonaparte; | with the addition of numerous recently discovered species. | And including | representations of the principal insects, | forest trees, and fruits of America. | Drawn, engraved, and coloured | under the superintendence of | Captain Thomas Brown, F. L. S. M. W. S. &c. | President of the Royal Physical Society. | Edinburgh: | published by Henry Constable; | Hurst, Chance, & Co. and Moon, Boys, & Graves, London; | John Cumming, Dublin. | 1831."

Brown's book is not in any true sense an edition of Wilson and Bonaparte. It is composed partly of original figures, but in a large measure it is compiled from the works of Wilson, Bonaparte, Audubon, Richardson and Swainson, and Jardine and Selby. As specimens of the engraver's art these plates exemplify the best work of the then leading engravers of Edinburgh, such as W. H. Lizars (who engraved Selby's plates and the earliest of Audubon's), E. Mitchell, R. Scott, Jas. Johnstone, John Miller, Samuel Milne, etc. In copying, however, the artist often lost the spirit of the originals, and in many of the new figures, which must of necessity have been drawn from stuffed birds, ignorance of the life attitudes of the subjects is often painfully apparent. In one of the early plates the perching of an Arctic Owl on a Magnolia tree was probably a bit of unconscious humor on the part of the artist who designed the plate.

In 1834, a year before the completion of this series of plates, Capt. Brown published the Game Bird plates as a separate work, with a title-page engraved specially for it by Turvey, which reads as follows:

"Illustrations | of the | Game Birds | of | North America | Chiefly the size of Nature | By | Captain Thomas Brown | F. L. S. M. W. S. M. K. S., M. P. S. | Late President of the Royal Physical Society, | &c. &c. &c. | Edinburgh | Frazer & Co. 54 North Bridge; | Wm. Curry, Junr. & Co. Dublin; | John Smith & Son Glasgow; | & Smith Elder & Co. 65 Cornhill. | London | MDCCCXXXIV. Designed and engraved by James Turvey." 16 pll. col., folio (21½ × 16½ in.).

I found a copy of this book, of which I can find no mention in any bibliography or library- or sale-catalogue, in a book-shop in Birmingham last year. It consists, as I have said, of the Game Bird plates of the larger work, sixteen plates, unnumbered, being plates 69-83 and 102, of the larger work. In these plates the birds only are colored, whereas in the copies of the larger work that I have seen, the accessories (plants, insects, and backgrounds) are colored also. This set of sixteen plates includes figures of several of our western birds which are interesting as being among the earliest published portraits of those species. From the following account of the Game Bird plates one can form some notion of the character of the more extended work; *ex pede Herculem*:

Pl. I. [LXXV. of the larger work]. "Tetrao cupido" [Tympanuchus americanus (Reich.)]. Fig. 1, ♂, after Wilson; Fig. 2, ♀, original. The habitat is given, "State of New York." Since Wilson's figure was made from a Kentucky specimen, it may be that the female (Fig. 2) was drawn from a Long Island Heath Hen (T. cupido), which would be very interesting, if true. I believe De Kay's rude figure (Birds of New York, Pl. 77, fig. 175) is the only picture of a Heath Hen not from Martha's Vineyard, besides the original figure of Catesby.

Pl. II. [LXXIV.] Fig. 1, "Tetrao umbellus" [Bonasa umbellus (Linn.)], ♂, after Wilson; Fig. 2, "Tetrao phasianellus" [Pedicætes p. columbianus (Ord)], ♀, after Bonaparte.

Pl. III. [LXXVII.]. "Tetrao canadensis." [Fig. 1, ♂, Canachites franklinii (Dougl.); Fig. 2, ♀, Canachites canadensis (Linn.)]. Both after Bonaparte.

Pl. IV. [LXXVIII.]. "Tetrao franklinii" [Canachites franklinii (Dougl.)]. Fig. 1, ♂, perhaps altered from Rich. & Swains., F. B. A., Pl. 61; Fig. 2, ♀, original.

Pl. V. [LXXVI.]. "Tetrao obscurus" [Dendragapus obscurus (Say)]. Fig. 1, ♂, orig.; Fig. 2, ♀, after Bonaparte.

Pl. VI. [LXXIX.]. "Tetrao richardsonii" [Dendragapus obscurus richardsonii (Dougl.)]. Fig. 1, ♂; Fig. 2, ♀. Original. A fine plate designed by Jos. B. Kidd, a young landscape artist of Edinburgh, a friend of Audubon. Engraved by R. Scott.

Pl. VII. [LXXX.]. "Tetrao urophasianus" [Centrocerus urophasianus (Bonap.)]. Fig. 1, ♂, orig.; Fig. 2, ♀, after Bonaparte.

Pl. VIII. [LXXXI.]. "Lagopus saliceti" [Lagopus lagopus (Linn.)]. Fig. 1, ♂, spring plumage; Fig. 2, ♂, summer plumage; Fig. 3, ♀, winter plumage. Original.

Pl. IX. [LXXXII.]. Fig. 1, Lagopus leucurus Sw. & Rich., adapted from Sw. & Rich., F. B. A., Pl. 63; Fig. 2, Lagopus rupestris (Gmel.), orig.

Pl. X. [LXXXIII.]. "Lagopus mutus" [Lagopus rupestris (Gmel.)]. Fig. 1, ♂, winter; Fig. 2, ♀, summer. "Inhabits Winter Island." Original.

Pl. XI. [LXIX.]. "Perdix virginiana" [Colinus virginianus (Linn.)]. Fig. 1, ♂, after Wilson; Fig. 2, ♀, orig.

Pl. XII. [LXXII.]. Fig. 1, "Ortyx capistrata" [Odontophorus capueira (Spix)], "drawn by Captain Brown," evidently from the type specimen of *Ortyx capistratus* Jard. & Selby (= *Odontophorus capueira*), in the collection of Sir Wm. Jardine, purchased by him from a collection of skins sold in Edinburgh (Jardine & Selby, Ill. Orn., I. Pl. 38, 1828); Fig. 2, "Ortyx neoxenus" [young ♂, or ♀, of *Euppsychortyx cristatus* (Linn.)], outline seemingly copied from the little wood-cut in Bennett's 'Gardens and Menagerie of the Zoölogical Society,' Vol. II, p. 311, 1831, though the details must have been filled in from a specimen, I should suppose. *Ortyx neoxenus* Vigors, the types of which were in the gardens of the

Zoölogical Society of London, were identified by Gould as *Eupsychortyx cristatus* (Linn.).

Pl. XIII. [LXX.]. Fig. 1, "*Ortyx macroura*" [*Dendrortyx macrurus* (Jard. & Selby)], a representation of the type in coll. Jardine (Jardine & Selby, Ill. Orn., I. Pl. 49, 1828), probably adapted from the plate in Jardine & Selby; Fig. 2, "*Ortyx montezumæ*" [*Cyrtonyx montezumæ* (Vig.)], after Jardine & Selby, Vol. III. Pl. 126, 1833, but altered.

Pl. XIV. [LXXI.]. Fig. 1, "*Ortyx douglasii*" [*Lophortyx elegans* (Less.)]; Fig. 2, "*Ortyx californica*" [*Lophortyx californicus* (Shaw)], ♂; Fig. 3, do., ♀. Original.

Pl. XV. [LXXIII.]. "*Ortyx picta*" [*Oreortyx pictus plumifer* Gould)]. Fig. 1, ♂; Fig. 2, ♀ [?]. Original. The earliest pictorial representation of the species, so far as I know, but unfortunately a wretched performance. The so-called female, particularly, looks as if it might have been constructed from Douglas's remarkable description of the female of *Ortyx pictus*.

Pl. XVI. [CII.]. Fig. 1, "*Scolopax noveboracensis*" [*Macrorhamphus griseus* (Gmel.)]; Fig. 2, "*Scolopax wilsonii*" [*Gallinago delicata* Ord]; Fig. 3, "*Scolopax minor*" [*Philohela minor* (Gmel.)]. All after Wilson.

That a very small edition of Brown's work was published is evinced by its excessive rarity at the present time. The book was not of a character to meet any real want, and moreover it entered into competition with the great work of Audubon's, then publishing. An entry in Audubon's journal in October, 1830, goes far toward explaining the failure of Capt. Brown's undertaking, and at the same time brings out in bright relief the indefatigable industry and colossal self-confidence of Audubon:

"A few days after I began writing on the Biography, it was known in Edinburgh that I had arrived, and Professors Jameson, Graham, and others whom I had known, called on me; and I found at the 'fourteenth hour,' that no less than three editions of 'Wilson's Ornithology' were about to be published, one by Jameson, one by Sir W. Jardine, and another by a Mr. Brown. Most persons would probably have been discouraged by this information, but it only had a good effect on me, because since I have been in England I have studied the character of Englishmen as carefully as I studied the birds in America. And I know full well, that in England novelty is always in demand, and that if a thing is well known it will not receive much support. Wilson has had his day, thought I to myself, and now is my time. I will write, and I will hope to be read; and not only so, but I will push my publication with such unremitting vigour, that my book shall come before the public before Wilson's can be got out.

"Writing now became the order of the day. I sat at it as soon as I awoke in the morning, and continued the whole long day, and so full was my mind of birds and their habits, that in my sleep I continually dreamed of birds. I found Mr. McGillivray equally industrious, for although he did not rise so early in the morning as I did, he wrote much

later at night. . . ; and so the manuscripts went on increasing in bulk, like the rising of a stream after abundant rains, and before three months had passed the first volume was finished. . .

"*March* 13, 1831. My book is now on the eve of being presented to the world. The printing will be completed in a few days."¹

What became of the royal octavo plates and of the 18° series intended to bind up with the little Jameson edition of Wilson and Bonaparte, both of which were announced in the 'Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal' for 1831, as cited above? I think it probable that the former were appropriated by Sir William Jardine, that they were in fact the plates which adorn his octavo edition of Wilson and Bonaparte, which appeared in 1832. Otherwise they are unaccounted for. If, too, one examines even an untrimmed copy of Jardine's original issue, he will perceive that the plates are cut down nearly to the quick, indeed quite to the plate mark; as if originally designed for a *royal* octavo atlas and doomed by an afterthought to be the accompaniment of a *small* octavo text.

The fate of the 18° plates appears to have been even more disastrous than that of the folio series edited by Capt. Brown. After diligent enquiry I find but two indications of the existence of any of these plates at the present time. Some years ago Professor Newton furnished Dr. Coues with an account of the first part of a set of little plates illustrating Wilson and Bonaparte's Ornithology, issued by the publishers of Jameson's edition and uniform in size with that edition. The title as given by Coues ('Birds Col. Valley,' p. 600) was as follows:

"American Ornithology. | Illustrations | of | American Ornithology; | reduced from the | original work of Alexander Wilson. | London: | published by William Spooner, 259, Regent Street, | Oxford Street; | Hurst, Chance, and Co., 65 St. Paul's Church-Yard; | and Constable and Co., Edinburgh. | [No date.] 16mo? 18mo? (say 4 × 6 inches). No. 1, containing 8 plates."

Finally, Mr. Witmer Stone has a copy of Jameson's edition of Wilson and Bonaparte which contains nineteen colored plates ($3\frac{1}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ in.) scattered through the first two of the four volumes. That these plates were made for the book in which they are found is proved by the fact that many of them bear the appropriate page-references to the text of that edition. I have little doubt that they represent a fuller set of the series Professor Newton saw, and that they belong to the small 18° edition announced in the 'New Edinburgh Philosophical Journal' in 1831.

Yours very truly,

WALTER FAXON,
Cambridge, Mass.

Feb. 17, 1903.

¹The Life and Adventures of John James Audubon, the Naturalist. Edited, from materials supplied by his Widow, by Robert Buchanan. London, 1868. Pp. 172, 173.