

72. **Empidonax virescens.** ACADIAN FLYCATCHER.—Breeds over the low ground of both states, and ranges up the river valleys, rarely into the mountains. I have found it in Center County nesting in the same ravine with such species as the Canada Warbler and Solitary Vireo. Scarce in Cape May Co., N. J. Data on twenty-six nests give: average set, 3 (2); average date, June 6 (May 30–July 16).

73. **Empidonax minimus.** LEAST FLYCATCHER.—Breeds commonly over the northern half of New Jersey and the mountainous parts of Pennsylvania south to Berks and Center Counties and rarely to Montgomery. Data on twenty-one nests give: average set, 4 (3); average date May 30 (May 25–June 27).

(*To be concluded.*)

UNCOLORED PRINTS FROM HAVELL'S ENGRAVINGS OF AUDUBON'S 'BIRDS OF AMERICA'.

BY HARRY HARRIS.

Plates II and III.

EIGHT uncolored prints of Audubon's folio plates have lately come into the writer's possession, and their examination has led to a closer study of the work of the engraver. A careful comparison of the prints with the corresponding published issues has brought out a few points which may prove of interest, especially as the comparatively scant reference to Robert Havell Jr. found in the literature of American Ornithology perhaps indicates that complete recognition has not been given this master engraver for his part in immortalizing the genius of Audubon.

Mr. George Alfred Williams of Summit, N. J., has lately said,¹ in a very illuminating review of Havell's career, that to the genius of this man is due much of the extraordinary artistic success which

¹ Williams, George Alfred. Robert Havell, Junior, Engraver of Audubon's "The Birds of America." *The Print-Collector's Quarterly*. October, 1916. Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston.

attended the publication of the drawings of the great naturalist and that without the coöperation of a talent capable of the task of faithful, intelligent, and artistic reproduction, the work would have failed of its ultimate purpose.

Audubon at first entrusted the engraving of his plates to W. H. Lizars, one of the greatest engravers of bird-portraits of his time. His results however did not satisfy Audubon's demands, and after five plates had been done the work was taken from his hands and given over to Robert Havell Jr., of London. This Havell, the last of a long line of artists and workers in copper-plate, was the sole engraver of all the Audubon plates, save the five referred to, and three of these were later retouched by him. That the elder Havell engraved any of the plates is clearly disproved in the article above quoted.

Havell's work at all times fully met the rigid requirements of Audubon, who on more than one occasion expressed with enthusiasm his entire satisfaction in the quality of Havell's engraving.

Late in 1838, after the last part of 'The Birds of America' had issued and when Havell was dismantling his plant preparatory to removal to America, he wrote to Audubon for instructions relative to the manner of packing "five perfect sets" and certain "loose sets." This reference to loose sets presumably included all the trial proofs worthy of preservation, together with all other prints that had accumulated during the twelve years of work, and, for one reason or another, had not been colored. Audubon's reply¹ to this inquiry, under date of February 20, 1839, indicated that he did not know the nature of these loose sets but he states particularly that he wanted them saved. A prolonged search of all available sources of information has failed to disclose another reference to these loose sets. There is no reasonable doubt, however, that they were *all* shipped to Audubon, since those that have been preserved to the present day are directly traceable to him or his descendants. No record of their number seems to have been kept by either Audubon or Havell. I am informed by Mr. Williams that the only prints brought to this country by Havell, aside from the superb set colored

¹ Dean, Ruthven. The Copper-Plates of the Folio Edition of Audubon's 'Birds of America,' With a Brief Sketch of the Engravers. Auk, Vol. XXV, No. 4, 1908.



entirely by himself, were his own working proofs. These proofs, now owned by Mr. Williams, are cut into small portions, probably for the greater convenience of the engraver in handling.

Mr. Ruthven Dean, who has thrown so much light on obscure matters pertaining to Auduboniana, writes that he has in his possession an uncolored proof from the Foolish Guillemot plate and that he has data referring to some three hundred other black prints which were at one time in the hands of Audubon. This number indicates the existence of approximately a complete set.

The eight prints¹ above referred to as discovered by the writer were presented some time during the year 1850 — together with others since destroyed by fire — by M. and Mme. Audubon to their friend and neighbor Judge John B. Church. These prints are unquestionably trial proofs, as, aside from possessing a characteristic brilliance and sharpness, they show certain discrepancies and interesting errors in the lettering which render these particular copies unfit for use in the published work and made it imperative that the engravings be immediately corrected.

It will be noted in the accompanying reproduction of the proof from the American Crow plate that the scientific name of the bird, *Corvus americanus*, is repeated after the words, "Black Walnut". In correcting this error by substituting the scientific name of the tree, *Juglans nigra*, it was found necessary to reëngrave the words Black Walnut, so that the entire line might conform to the altered display. Unfortunately some pencil notations on this print had been erased before it came into the writer's hands. These may have been made by Havell himself, as his fragmentary working proofs are so marked. In the lower right hand corner, whether referring to the predominate color note to be used in this plate or not, is plainly discernible the word "Black." A reproduction is also given of a colored print from this plate taken from a published set to show, as much as it is possible to show in a greatly reduced reproduction by the half-tone process, the qualities referred to above.

¹ Plate LVI	Red-shouldered Hawk.	Plate CCCI	Canvas Backed Duck.
" CXXXII	Three-toed Woodpecker.	" CCCII	Dusky Duck.
" CLVI	American Crow.	" CCCXX	Little Sandpiper.
" CCXVII	Louisiana Heron.	" CCCXCII	Louisiana Hawk.

Some critics have objected to a certain flatness in Audubon's drawings, but it is evident from a comparison of the two accompanying illustrations that a degree of the depth or rotundity attained in these plates by the engraver has perhaps been lost by the application of the flat color washes.

The method employed by Havell in executing his plates was that known as aquatinting, a very difficult, complicated, and tedious process. That he was thoroughly at home in this medium of expression and was excelled by but few, if any, aquatinters of his day is shown by the universal commendation of his work by competent art critics. The term "aquatint" refers of course to the biting of the copper plate with aqua-fortis, and not to the coloring of the print with water-color washes. Whatever of brilliance a print might possess, by virtue of the mastery of the engraver's technique, or whatever of freshness it might exhibit by being a first printing from a soft and rapidly deteriorating plate, is obviously more manifest in a proof fresh pulled and uncolored. And these are just the qualities that impart to the Havell proofs their chief charm — they recall Havell rather more than they do Audubon. Long familiarity with the published work does not prepare one for the impression conveyed by a first view of these proofs. The prodigious amount of work underlying the color and the amazing dexterity of the hand that accomplished it is revealed. It is like a look behind the scenes, a familiar glimpse that brings home the personal side of the great enterprise. A thrill of intimacy is experienced. Here, on a full sized, untrimmed sheet of the finest water-color paper made, is a trial impression from the lately completed engraving, once handled and closely inspected for defects and errors, as well as for improvements in style, by the be-aproned and acid stained Havell, and later owned and cherished by the gallant and demonstrative Audubon. A great relic! — perhaps unique. A magnificent example of a practically lost art.



Starling. Cuv.
JUNIOR, ARRANGÉ ET
DÉFINI PAR
M. J. AUDIN, D'APRÈS
LES ŒUVRES DE M. J. AUDIN