

A COLLECTING TRIP IN KOREA

By MALCOLM P. ANDERSON

I SHOULD like to give THE CONDOR a specific list of the birds seen and obtained by me in Korea, but owing to my own ignorance, and for other reasons, this is not possible, so I content myself with the following account of one of my journeys, with some indications of what the bird fauna is like.

On the 29th of October, 1906, I left Seoul for the region sixty or seventy miles northeast of there. I had heard that there was some forest out that way, and longed to find it. In company I had my Japanese assistant, Orii, and a Korean "boss." Four big and dirty coolies carried my outfit of food, blankets, traps, and ammunition for a month's collecting. The coolies had promised to travel twenty miles a day, and had been paid for a day in advance for that distance, but I saw soon after we started that they would not go so far, so at a village ten miles on our way I hired a fifth fellow. But this did no good; they went no faster. At nightfall we were but fifteen miles from Seoul. We had passed that day thru the small cultivated valleys, and barren, dry, and much eroded hills which surround the capitol. The only birds we had seen were a crow, some kites, and the magpie (*Pica rustica* I believe), which is very common in Korea.

Orii and I spent that night in a little room at a village inn. As in most such places the walls were of mud much blackened with smoke, and tapestried with sooty cobwebs; the floor was of mud and stones covered with oiled paper. The sole entrance was thru a little door which served as window too, being a framework covered with paper.

The following day I sent the coolies about their own business, and engaged two horses to carry my things. When he came to pack, the driver objected that there was too much for two horses; I must have three. This was not true, but as he refused to load all, I engaged a by-standing coolie to pack something, and that day we proceeded much faster.

About twenty miles from Seoul I noticed a decided improvement in the country. The pines and bushes on the hills became more plentiful, water more abundant, and the whole aspect less desolate. With the exception of one large gray shrike (*Lanius excubitor?*) I saw no new birds this day.

The morning of our third day out there was a slight rain, and I was powerless to get the horse driver to start, so we were compelled to wait for the rain to cease, which it did about noon. Then the driver wanted me to pay him for the previous day; but this I refused to do because I felt he intended to abscond as soon as he got his money. I paid his bill at the inn, but still he refused to go, but I held out, and at last we started at a good pace, and in the evening reached a village called Penchan, fifty miles northeast of Seoul. Nearby here I observed some high hills lightly wooded with pines in the canyons, and with some brush on the ridges. I determined to stop here a few days, and explore these hills. So we obtained the best room in the best inn, and unloaded our packs there. The room proved to be nine feet square, with a beam along one side, by way of shelf, which was just the right height to hit one's head against when one rose from a stooping position. We didn't stay long enough to accustom ourselves to that beam. This room was lighted by two doors. I found that by shoving my table close to one of them I could see well enough to skin, during the lightest hours, but the more satisfactory way was to skin by lantern-light in the evening. We lived on canned goods largely, but also

bought boiled rice from the inn, and made bannocks in the frying pan over a charcoal fire.

The commonest bird at Penchan was the species of *Emberiza* found in China and Korea; there were several other sparrows but I cannot name them; a nuthatch (*Sitta*) inhabited the pine trees, and a species of *Acredula* with a wholly white head was seen in the woods. About the bushes and tangled vines at edges of paddy fields we sometimes found large flocks of a little bird I called the "Rosy-tinted Tit." It is about the size of our Plain Titmouse, but with a longer, graduated tail. The ground-color of head and body is dull gray-brown, but in some lights it has a distinctly rosy tinge, especially on the breast. A thrush much like our robin was obtained, and a specimen of a blue flycatcher (*Tarsiger*). Some dippers (*Cinclus pallasi*) were seen, and one preserved. Going in bands of ten to twenty-five, was a gray magpie (probably *Cyanopica*). It has a blue-black head and is so shy that one seldom gets more than one chance to shoot at the flock. The same gray shrike mentioned above was seen several times here, and obtained. Other birds were the red-bellied woodpecker (*Dryobates subcirris*), a *Falco*, a *Circus*, and a small snipe.

On November 4th, I moved 15 miles northeast to a town called Kimhoa (which may be found on the best maps). I had been led to think that there was more woods there, but on arrival found only a small town with scarcely a tree in sight. We found, however, on exploration several hilltops grown with pines and oaks, and these we called, by courtesy, "the woods." At this new town we had better quarters, and were able to accomplish more. Altho most of our time was spent in trapping mammals, our chief object, we secured a number of birds in addition to those taken before.

A small red-bellied woodpecker (*Dryobates japonicus*), a green woodpecker (*Picus canus*) and a small black-and-gray woodpecker (probably *Dryobates*) were found here. Also a ptarmigan (*Lagopus*) and some mallard, which we used to persuade the Japanese garrison to let us have some charcoal. Then there was a hawfinch (*Coccothraustes*), a purple finch (*Carpodacus*), and a greenfinch (*Chloris?*). One day Orii brought in an eagle (*Aquila*); and a waxwing (*Ampelis*), a wren (*Troglodytes*), and the creeper (*Certhia familiaris*) were among the additions to the collection.

In some valleys I occasionally saw cranes (*Grus* sp.) but did not try to secure them. Once I saw a large white swan which I suppose was *Cygnus musicus*. Later these swans became plentiful and were on sale in the markets at Seoul, Fusan, etc. At Kimhoa geese (*Anser segetum?*) were often seen flying over. Later when I was farther south they became very abundant indeed along the larger streams. Korea is a paradise for the duck and goose hunter. A little quail (*Coturnix*) was seen once or twice, but not secured in this locality; and one of the very commonest birds was the Siberian tit (*Parus* sp.). At the end of November we forsook this part of Korea and went southward.

The Koreans are a kind, simple-hearted, and hospitable people. They are uneducated it is true, but not so ignorant as some would have us think. They generally treated me as if I were a prince.

Chefoo, China.