species of the same genus, but not H. pelagicus. Two species of Rissa (R. kotzebui and R. brevirostris) occupy the coast in countless numbers.

46. Stejneger on the Genus Cepphus.


Mr. Stejneger's chief points are that a black-winged Guillemot allied to Cepphus (intellige Uria) carbo occurs in the North Atlantic, and that Cepphus mandli is the ordinary species of White-winged Guillemot in North America, although C. grylle may also occur there. A synopsis of all the species is added. European ornithologists are requested to examine and report upon the supposed examples of the problematical C. motzfeldi in the British and Leyden Museums.

47. Travers on the Organic Productions of New Zealand.


This essay contains some good remarks on the distribution of the species of birds in the different islands of New Zealand.

X.—Letters, Extracts, Announcements, &c.

We have received the following letters addressed to the Editors of 'The Ibis':—

Smithsonian Institution,
November 28, 1884.

Sirs,—I take great pleasure in corroborating Mr. Stejneger's remarks concerning the "Shedding of the Claws in the Ptarmigan and allied Birds," as I had abundant opportunity of observing it as a fact while travelling recently in Labrador and Ungava.

Yours &c.,
Lucien M. Turner.
Sirs,—Though we have not had an opportunity of comparing the types, we have little doubt that the Phontipara described from Roraima, in the last volume of ‘The Ibis’ (1884, p. 445), as P. phaeoptila is the same as Phontipara fumosa, Lawrence, from Trinidad (Ann. Lyc. N. Y. x. p. 396, 1874). Both birds are described as being of a uniform fuliginous black above, unrelied by olive-green on the back, as in the allied species P. bicolor &c.

We are, yours &c.,

O. Salvin and F. D. Godman.

Singular Development of Opisthocomus.—Mr. Coale, of Chicago, sends us an account of an apparently very remarkable discovery in the development of the Hoatzin (Opisthocomus cristatus) made by Mr. Edward M. Brigham. The exact facts are not very clearly stated in the paper (which was read before the Chicago Academy of Sciences on October 14th, 1884), but the following passage seems to contain the pith of the discovery:

"While making embryological studies in the interior of the great island of Marajó, on the small river Anabiju, I discovered the quadruped-bird.

"After having examined many specimens of various ages, I found that from what corresponds to about the embryonic state of development of the common fowl at the tenth day of incubation, the fore feet showed their characters unmistakably throughout their egg-development, and to a period of several days after hatching the fore feet, toes, and claws held their characters as such, as unmistakably as those parts of the posterior members.

"Later a progressive modification manifested itself by reducing the digits, exfoliating the claws, and developing these anterior members into those characteristic of a bird. There is, among the higher vertebrate animals, so far as I know, no
other example of post-natal metamorphosis, in such fundamental organs, to any thing like this extent.

"The law enunciated by Von Baer—that the phylogenetic development is represented in the ontogenetic—has a wide expression here. An important ancestral feature is persistent beyond the egg or pre-natal development. The animal progressing in its embryonic course passes into its reptilian ancestral type, and before its evolution has carried it through this—its reptilian phase—it emerges from the egg. Thus, from an egg laid by a two-footed two-winged bird, hatches a quadruped animal.

"For several days after hatching it retains its quadruped character, then, in the open air and sunlight, one pair of legs evolves into wings. Front legs are purposeless in a bird."

The National Bird-Collection at Washington.—"The bird-collection of the National Museum has increased from 93,091 at the end of 1883 to 100,126 up to October 7, 1884,—7035 specimens having thus been added since January 1. It may be of interest to our readers to know that the enumeration of the bird-record was begun with 3696 specimens, forming Professor Baird's private collection, his catalogue, written in his own hand, forming Volume i. of the 'Museum Register of Birds,' which now comprises eighteen volumes, containing a full record of the immense collection built upon Professor Baird's donation. Professor Baird's cabinet, now merged with the general collection, consisted chiefly of specimens collected, prepared, and labelled by himself and his brother, Wm. M. Baird, and its value is further enhanced by many of Audubon's types, presented to Professor Baird by Mr. Audubon. All American ornithologists will rejoice that Professor Baird has lived to see so magnificent a collection grow from the comparatively small nucleus which he formed, and with which must be connected in his memory many pleasant associations; and they all hope that he may live to witness the steady development of what is now the best collection extant of North-American and
West-Indian birds into one without a rival in any feature."—
*The Auk*, i. p. 403.

*Ornithological Works in Progress.*—The next (tenth) volume of the 'British Museum Catalogue of Birds,' to contain the account of the Dicéidæ, Hirundinidæ, Mniotiltidæ, and allied families, is now in course of preparation by Mr. R. Bowdler Sharpe. The eleventh volume, devoted to the three great Neotropical families Aërebide, Tanagridæ, and Icteridæ, has been undertaken by Selater, and will be issued next year.

Mr. Symington Grieve announces a history of the 'Great Auk or Garefowl,' its archæology and remains, to be published by Mr. T. C. Jack, of London and Edinburgh, and Mr. F. S. Mitchell a volume of the 'Birds of Lancashire' (Van Voorst). Dr. G. Hartlaub is at work on a new collection of birds from Enin Bey. Capt. Shelley has undertaken the determination of the birds collected by Mr. H. H. Johnston on Kilimandjaro, and has already read his first paper on this subject before the Zoological Society. He has also in preparation a general list of all the known Ethiopian birds, with localities.

Our President, Lord Lilford, we are pleased to be able to add, is in sufficiently good health to undertake a new Bird-book, to be called 'Coloured Figures of the Birds of the British Islands.' The first number of this work will be ready in April next.