

P R E F A C E.

IT has been frequently remarked that the productions of distant countries have received a much larger share of attention than those objects by which we are more immediately surrounded ; and it is certainly true, that while numerous and costly illustrations have made us acquainted with the Ornithology of most other parts of the world, the Birds of Europe, in which we are, or ought to be, most interested, have not received that degree of attention which they naturally demand. The present work has been undertaken to supply this deficiency, and I cannot but feel highly gratified that a number of concurring circumstances have enabled me to carry my intentions into effect with comparative facility, and I hope to the entire satisfaction of the whole of the Subscribers ; this I am induced to believe is the case from the patronage with which the work has been honoured since its commencement.

My reasons for undertaking a work comprising the ornithology of the whole of Europe are sufficiently obvious : in the first place no publication of a similar kind had been completed, although several had been commenced ; and secondly, a work exclusively confined to the British Fauna would never be perfect for any length of time, owing to the frequent accession of other species from various European localities ; besides which I was desirous of rendering my work interesting to the continental ornithologists as well as to those of our own country. I have used my best exertions to render it as perfect as possible up to the present time, for which purpose I have visited nearly all the continental collections with the view of examining personally every bird before figuring it ; but should additional species reward the zeal and ardour with which natural history is now cultivated (which I doubt not will be the case), I propose to publish them from time to time in the form of a Supplement, and by this means keep the work as nearly complete as possible. I have omitted a few of the species enumerated in the lists of

continental authors, in consequence either of my never having met with specimens of the birds; or because I am doubtful as to the propriety of their being separated from other known species*.

In my arrangement of the species I have followed with some very slight modifications the views of Mr. Vigors, which are now so generally adopted in this country. In the subdivision of the genera I have perhaps gone further than most other ornithologists, but at the same time I feel convinced that these subdivisions are naturally indicated; that they tend to facilitate the studies of the naturalist; and that some of the groups might have been still further divided with propriety. In a few instances the characters of some of the minor sub-genera have been inadvertently omitted; but this omission will not be found of any material consequence. The generic characters accompanying *Totanus hypoleucus* should be cancelled, as they have been previously given with *Totanus fuscus*. I am also aware that some other trifling errors have occurred, but I trust they will be looked upon with leniency when it is taken into consideration that the work has been commenced and completed in the short space of five years amidst numerous other avocations.

It would argue a want of gratitude in me were I to omit acknowledging the facilities which the Council of the Zoological Society have afforded me in this undertaking, and their kindness in permitting me to dedicate the work to them. I also conceive that I am considerably indebted for the success of my publication to the more general diffusion of a taste for natural history, towards which that admirable Society has so largely and successfully contributed, and to which in a great measure must be attributed the favourable reception which works of Natural History now so universally meet with; and I am also deeply indebted to the Council for the liberality with which I have at all times been allowed to avail myself of the treasures contained in the Society's Museum. To the national establishment, the British Museum, I am similarly

* *Fig.*—*Corvus leucophaeus*, a variety of *Corvus corax*.

—— *spermologus*, a variety of *Corvus monedula*?

Alauda Dupontii (*Certhilauda bifasciata*?).

—— *Kollyii*.

Emberiza provincialis.

Fringilla incerta.

—— *borealis*.

Hemipodius lunatus, synonymous with *Hem. tachydromus*; and

Larus capistratus.

indebted, and would here beg to express my thanks to its officers for the many attentions I have received from them. From most of the public Museums of the Continent I have received much assistance. To M. Temminck, Director of the Royal Museum at Leyden, so well known for his valuable works on Natural History, I beg to offer my most grateful acknowledgments for the assistance he has afforded me, without which my work would necessarily have been long delayed, and in fact could never have been brought to that complete state in which I am happy to say it now stands: so great indeed has been the liberality of this eminent naturalist, that he has even confided new species to my care, and allowed me to figure and describe them in my work before including them in his own; and his liberality will, I doubt not, be duly appreciated by the scientific public. In Professor Lichtenstein of Berlin I have met with another kind and liberal friend, to whom I am indebted for the use of several of the rarer European Birds, among which were some of the original specimens collected by the celebrated Pallas. To M. Schreibers and MM. Natterer of Vienna I am also under great obligations, as well as to the gentlemen connected with the collections of Paris and Frankfort, who readily afforded me every assistance I required. To the collection of the Baron Feldegg of Frankfort I have had free access, and to this gentleman I am indebted for the use of many rarities, and of some species entirely new to science. To William Yarrell, Esq., I shall ever feel deeply grateful, for the judicious and kind assistance which he has at all times rendered me, and for the use of many valuable specimens from his excellent collection. My ever lamented friend, E. T. Bennett, Esq., was at all times much interested in my publications; I am therefore proud to add my grateful testimony to his varied talents and kind and amiable conduct upon every occasion; and of the numerous individuals honoured by his friendship there is none who more sincerely deplores his untimely decease than myself. To the Earl of Derby, the Honourable W. T. T. Fiennes, Sir William Jardine, Bart., N. A. Vigors, Esq., W. H. Rudston Read, Esq., T. B. L. Baker, Esq., J. J. Audubon, Esq., Captain S. E. Cook, A. Waterhouse, Esq., of Liverpool, Dr. De Jersey, E. H. Reynard, Esq., and to several other gentlemen my thanks are likewise due, for the warm interest which they have at all times taken in the present work. Neither must the valuable assistance afforded me by Mr. Martin of the Zoological Society be forgotten. In conclusion I would beg leave to return my grateful thanks to the whole of the Subscribers for the support with which they have been pleased to favour me.

Perhaps I may be allowed to add, that not only by far the greater number of the Plates of this work, but all those of my "Century of Birds," of the "Monograph of the Trogons," and at least three fourths of the "Monograph of the Toucans" have been drawn and lithographed by Mrs. Gould, from sketches and designs by myself always taken from nature. The remainder of the drawings have been made by Mr. Lear, whose abilities as an artist are so generally acknowledged that any comments of my own are unnecessary. With the opportunities still in my power I should consider myself to blame were I not to continue in the course I have hitherto pursued in the study and illustration of subjects in ornithology; and it is my intention, so long as permitted, steadily to use my humble efforts to advance this delightful branch of natural science. My thanks are due to Mr. Bayfield, under whose direction the whole of the Plates have been carefully and accurately coloured, and in fact too much praise cannot be accorded to the unceasing attention with which he has at all times afforded his assistance. The plates have been printed by Mr. Hullmandel, and the letter-press by Mr. R. Taylor; and these portions of the work have I trust been satisfactorily executed.

August 1, 1837.

JOHN GOULD.