

XXXVII.—*On the Birds of Madagascar, and their Connection with Native Folk-lore, Proverbs, and Superstitions.*
By the Rev. JAMES SIBREE, Jr., F.R.G.S.*—Part II.

[Continued from p. 228.]

III.—THE PASSERES OR PERCHING BIRDS.

THE third Order into which Birds are divided by most naturalists contains that large group of feathered creatures which are the principal songsters of the woods, and which, as their name implies, are found chiefly in the forests, or at least where there are trees. As will be seen by referring to the tabular arrangement given herewith (Table III., pp. 436–442), there are no less than 60 species of perching birds found in Madagascar. The greater proportion of these are seen only in the lower and wooded regions of the island; although a few, as will be noticed presently, inhabit the barer regions of the upper plateau, with their scanty clothing of trees and shrubs.

The greater number of these Perching Birds are of somewhat sombre plumage of browns and greys, with the exception of the Sun-birds, the Swallow-Shrikes, and the Weaver-birds. Of about forty families into which the whole Order is usually divided, sixteen have representatives in the island, several of these, especially the Thrushes and Warblers, including many species. Among the Madagascar Passeres, therefore, we find Swallow-Shrikes, Shrikes, Flycatchers, Thrushes, Warblers, Babblers, Bulbuls, Butcher-birds, Sun-birds, Swallows, Weaver-birds, and Starlings. Of the Crows, Titmice, Wagtails, and Larks there is a single species of each family. The Order includes also two species of birds (*Philepitta*) which were at one time supposed to be nearly allied to the Paradise-birds of New Guinea and the Moluccas, but are now known to belong to a peculiar group of Passeres (*Oligomyodæ*), mostly found in South America †.

Many of the birds found in Madagascar are by no means

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† Cf. Sclater, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xiv. p. 409.

deficient in the power of producing sweet sounds of a very pleasing character and in considerable variety of note; and, as we shall see, there are some few whose song has even been considered to resemble that of our European Nightingale. In several accounts which have been given by travellers of their journeys through various parts of the country, reference is made to the silence of the woods, to the paucity of animal-life, and to the very few sounds heard either from beast or bird. Now, while it is quite true that the animal-life of Madagascar is very scanty, I am disposed to think that these descriptions have been somewhat exaggerated, and the reason probably is that most journeys have been taken during the colder season, when the woods are comparatively silent. But they certainly are not so at all times of the year; and I find in a journal of my own the following remarks upon the abundance of bird-life in the woods, when travelling from Mâhandro to Imèrina in the month of November 1883:—"I noticed that the forest was by no means so silent as I had remarked at other times when passing through it. Former journeys, however, were made in the colder winter months of the year, but now that the warm weather is approaching, some bird or other was almost always heard. Every quarter of a mile or so we heard the constant and noisy call of the Cuckoo (*Kànkàfotra*), *kow-kow, kow-kow*, repeated three or four times; then the flute-like call of another Cuckoo, the *Toldho*, whose mellow notes were heard all the way from the coast to the forest; also the chirp and whistle of the *Railóvy*, or King Crow, as well as the incessant twitter of many small birds. Then came in now and then the long-drawn-out melancholy cries of the Lemurs high up among the trees."

So again, in memoranda of a stay at Ambôhidratrimo, at the edge of the upper forest, in December 1884, occurs the following:—"Here we sat down [on the margin of a forest-stream], enjoying thoroughly the beauty of the woods, and especially the singing of the birds. Never before had I heard in a Madagascar forest so many different notes, or so constant a sound of bird-life. Besides this there was the low undertone

of water flowing over the rapids some little distance away, and the hum of insects. It was a great enjoyment just to sit and listen, and see the birds as they frequently flew around us and over our heads. Among these were the *Sòikèly*, a species of Sun-bird, a very little fellow, which sat on the top-most point of a bare upright branch; the *Railóvy*, a species of Shrike or King Crow, with long forked tail; the Grey Parrot (*Bolòky*), with a long repeated whistle, as if going up the gamut; the *Vòrondèro* or Roller, with its prolonged whistle ending in a sudden drop; the *Parètika*, one of the Warblers, with a creaky little short note, something like a child's rattle; together with these sounds was the *kow-kow* of the *Kànkàfotra* Cuckoo, the varied mellow notes of the *Tolòho* Cuckoo, the cooing sound of the *Fòny* or Wood Pigeon, and also the call of one of the Hawks (*Bémànana*)."

Any one who has stayed at the edge of the upper forest* during the months of December or January, and has quietly watched for a short time among the woods, will not have had to complain of any scarcity of bird-life to admire and study. If we only remain perfectly still, the birds will come and alight all around us, seeking their food as they hop on the ground, or flutter from branch to branch. We may watch their nests and see their eggs, and then the young birds, noting from day to day how they develop, until one morning the nest is empty, for its little inmates have found out their power of wing, and have left to set up for themselves and add another little company to the tenants of the Madagascar forests. It may be truly said that the note of one bird or another is never silent at this time of year all day long, while some are heard also late at night.

A circumstance worth noting about the forest birds is thus described by the Rev. R. Baron, F.L.S.:—"The following phenomenon, which I have many times witnessed in the forests of Madagascar, has often struck me as singular. The birds

* A belt of forest, varying in width from 10 to 50 miles, surrounds the highlands of the interior of Madagascar and follows the coast-line at no great distance from the shore. On the eastern side it is divided into two belts for a distance of about 250 miles.

are not frequently seen except in flocks. A little twittering is first heard, one or two birds are seen, and then, in a few minutes, one is surrounded by a large number appearing as if by magic. The same thing has been noticed by others. But the strange thing about it is that 'birds *not* of a feather flock together.' I have seen as many as twenty or thirty birds, of six or seven different species, all travelling in the same company. Can this be for mutual defence?"*

The people who live near the upper line of the eastern forest say that many of the birds come up from the lower and warmer and more extensive line of forest as the summer approaches, but return as the season grows colder.

Before proceeding to notice separately each family of this Order, another extract or two may be given from a traveller's journal, showing the variety of birds to be seen in some localities. In a pamphlet called 'The Bàra Land,' by the Rev. W. Deans Cowan, the valley of the Isàhambàngana is thus described:—This valley "is one of the finest in this part of the country. It is now here more than three or four miles wide, and with its large river and many streams flowing into it from all sides, with its strips and patches of wood, its stretches of grass and its marshes, it is a pleasant valley, pleasant to the traveller, and a paradise to the naturalist." "I took my way down to the shady banks of a small stream flowing east to the river. Birds were in plenty: Black Parrots; the Fork-tailed Shrike (*Railómbó*) poured out its varied song of mimicry from the topmost branches; the White-browed Warbler (*Fitatrála*) sung his sweetest, whilst Doves sat silent in the branches over the water. The Kingfisher sat motionless on his favourite perch, and the Sandpiper (*Fandrafāsika*) was bobbing along the sand-reaches. The Oriole, the Wagtail, the Hoopoe, and a large bird like a Shrike were there; even the small Sun-bird (*Anatsòdy*) darted from place to place, his bright colours sparkling in the light. In about half an hour I had picked out and obtained the specimens I wanted, among which was a small Owl, very dark brown with white spots—it was new to me (*Ninox su-*

* 'Antananarivo Annual,' vi. p. 85.

perciliaris).” “Just at the crossing I got another of the Coua Cuckoos (*Taitso*).” “On the way to the next village we passed a small marsh on which were numbers of Muscovy Ducks, and among the long grass in the valley the Guinea-fowl were seen in hundreds.”

Referring to my observations in the preceding paragraphs, Mr. Cory* says:—“I think the want of bird-life in Madagascar is very marked when compared with England. I was very much struck with this scarcity of life in the woods on my first arrival. I have been in the forest at all times of the year, and although your remarks are very true, and there *are* a good many birds in summer, yet, if you try bird’s-nesting here, you will soon find out how few and far between the nests are. Every now and then a small flock of birds, as you describe, comes and twitters round you, but even then they are not many.”

I agree with Mr. Cory in the general accuracy of his statement; all I wished to show was that there is not such a complete want of bird-life in the Madagascar woods as is sometimes affirmed. From what M. Pollen and other travellers describe, the avifauna of the west side of the island must be far more abundant than is that of the interior.

The first bird in the arrangement of the Order Passeres is the White-necked Crow; and although he can by no means be reckoned as a song-bird, he is a very prominent member of the avifauna of Imèrina—indeed, of the whole of Madagascar,—and must therefore have a few words of description. This Crow—called *Goàika* by the Malagasy, probably from its harsh croak—is larger than a Magpie, with glossy black plumage, but with a collar of pure white, and a square white patch on his breast, so that he has a very clerical appearance, and is not nearly so sombre and undertaker-like as his English cousin. The *Goàika* is very common everywhere, being often seen in large numbers, especially near the markets, where he picks up a living from the refuse and the

* The Rev. C. P. Cory, B.A., of the S. P. G. Mission in Madagascar, to whom I am greatly indebted for much valuable information and criticism in these papers.

scattered rice. He is a bold and rather impudent bird, and is often seen fighting with the smaller Hawks. One day, walking with a friend near Ambóhimànga, we came upon a large flock of Crows, and wishing to obtain a specimen, my friend fired and shot one of them. For a moment there was a dead silence, but after a few seconds the whole flock set up an angry scream of rage and defiance, and, flying swiftly backwards and forwards, came so close to our faces that I feared they would strike at our eyes. Their anger and indignation at the death of their comrade, and their wish to avenge him, were unmistakably manifested in their behaviour. This Crow is occasionally kept by the Malagasy as a pet bird, and is sometimes taught to keep the fowls away from the paddy-rice which is placed on mats to dry in the sun. Mr. Cory says: "The nest of the Crow is placed on trees or rocks, and is defended fiercely from all enemies. The eggs are exactly similar in markings to those of the English Carrion Crow, but are rather rounder in form."

As might be expected, the Goàika is referred to in many Malagasy proverbs, two or three of which may be here quoted and translated, thus: "Like the Crow's coat—finished while it is young;" "Don't be lustrous outside (only), like a Crow;" "Many are the Crows, and one can't tell which is male and which female, for all have white necks; but whoever eats the arum (*Saonjo*), him will I punish;"* "Do like the soldiers: get up before the Crows, awake before the Warblers" (*Fítatra*). The bird is also alluded to in a native song, in the verses of which the Kite, the Brown Stork, the Lark, and the Cardinal-bird are successively mentioned; and the last verse runs as follows: "'Where are you from, old fellow, you Crow there?' 'I come from Antanánarivo.' 'How about the proclamation there?' said I. 'The proclamation,' said he, 'is severe enough.' 'What was it all about?' said I. 'Thieves,' said he, 'are to be killed.'"

The next family of the Perching Birds, that of the Swallow-Shrikes, contains in Madagascar six species, all of which are

* Several other proverbs also refer to the Crow's white neck and its eating the edible arum or *Saonjo*.

of genera peculiar to the island. One of these, Bernier's Swallow-Shrike, is a large bird, rufous-brown in colour. Of this Swallow-Shrike M. Grandidier says: "The male utters a frequent plaintive little cry, and appears to be much attached to his mate. If she falls by a gun-shot, he descends like an arrow, placing himself near her on the ground, and it is not difficult to take him. But when the male bird is killed, the female, on the contrary, flies far away." Another species, *Cyanolanius bicolor*, as its name implies, is of two strongly contrasted colours, blue above and ashy white below; another, *Leptopterus viridis*, is blackish green above and pure white below; while others, again, are reddish brown and white. As none of these birds frequent the central regions, their native names are mostly obscure; some appear to be imitative of their cry, as *Trétréky* and *Tsétèky*; while *Fôndrapòry* possibly refers to the yellow colouring of the lower part of their body.

The Fork-tailed Drongo, the only representative of its family in Madagascar, is a rather common bird, dark bluish green in colour, with a long tail, forked at the extremity. It lives in small companies, perching on dead branches, house-roofs, or on cattle-folds, and dashing off frequently in pursuit of insects, with a heavy clumsy flight. This *Railóvy* or *Railómbo*, by which names it is known in the interior, is alluded to in many of the fables and folk-tales of the Malagasy as "a well-behaved bird, with a long crest, and having a variety of note" (see fable quoted above, p. 211, in referring to popular notions about Owls). One of the *Railóvy*'s provincial names, *Andóvy*, seems to come from a root *dóvy*, "an enemy," probably from some superstition connected with it. M. Pollen gives the following, amongst other particulars, about this bird; he says: "The *Railóvy* may be seen in every part of the island which naturalists have visited. It is a very active bird and an excellent singer. Perched on a dead branch, it keeps up a constant noise, its strong voice giving forth several notes which very much resemble those of an organ. It also likes to imitate the cries of other birds, especially those of the *Tolòho* Cuckoo. In the spots fre-

quented by a large number of these Drongos, each one reserves to itself a hunting-ground, in which he tolerates the presence of no other birds, even of his own kind, not excepting those which are stronger than himself. When this bird has seized an insect, he returns immediately with his prey to the tree he had quitted. He is in the habit of warning, by a certain cry, all the other birds in the neighbourhood; so that when a bird of prey appears, he darts fiercely upon him and pursues him to a great distance. The nest of the Railóvy is, if possible, built on a branch overhanging a stream, and both the male and female birds take turns in the incubation. When the young are able to quit the nest they usually take their places in a row, on the branch of a tree, to which the parent birds come to supply them with food." Mr. Cowan speaks of finding the Railómbo "all over the Bára land, even on the desolate Hòrombè."

The Cuckoo-Shrike (*Graucalus cinereus*) is also said to be pretty common, going in companies of eight or ten, but it is less known than the Railóvy. One of its provincial names (*Vórontaniómby*) seems to imply that it is an attendant upon cattle, as are other Madagascar birds, especially the White Egret or *Vórompòtsy*.

Three Flycatchers are found in Madagascar; of one of them, the brown-tailed species, M. Pollen says that it has a loud monotonous cry of *tuw, tuw, tuw*. M. Grandidier, however, speaks of its song as being agreeable, resembling that of the Robin, and from it comes one of its names, *Kitikítika*.

Another species, as its name of "Changeable" Flycatcher denotes, undergoes remarkable changes of colour according to its age and sex. The female bird is entirely of a reddish brown, except the cap and nape, which are dark green. The young male has, during the first month, the same livery as the female, but its plumage soon changes to a beautiful maroon-red; then very soon the two middle tail-feathers become greatly lengthened, the quills being black, with a white fringe; the wing-coverts become partly white and partly black; and the feathers of the head change to dark green, with brilliant metallic reflections. At the breeding-

time the back and throat take the same tints as the head, and the belly and breast become white. This bird is found all over the island; it is always in motion, flitting from branch to branch in search of its insect food. Every time it moves it straightens its long tail and utters a peculiar little cry.

Of the third species (*Pseudobias wardi*), M. Grandidier says that its song is agreeable, resembling that of the Warblers. It hardly quits the summits of the highest trees*. The native names, at least with our present knowledge, or rather ignorance, throw no light on the habits of these Flycatchers.

We now come to *the* singing birds of Madagascar, those belonging to the families of the Thrushes (*Turdidæ*) and the Babbling Thrushes (*Timeliidæ*), with their twelve or thirteen species each.

Of the White-browed Warbler (*Copsychus albospecularis*), M. Pollen remarks: "This songster *par excellence* bears among the Antankàrana the name of *Sikitily*, but among the Sàkalàva that of *Todiana*. Its song is so powerful, varied, and agreeable that it might rival the best singing birds of Europe. This bird may be seen hopping lightly and briskly from branch to branch, all the time keeping a sharp look-out on what passes around. After assuring himself that no one is watching him, he perches perfectly erect on a branch and gives forth in a full volume of sound his melodious song, beating at the same time with his tail. This song much resembles that of the Nightingale, but it is more varied and shorter. The hen bird is very rarely seen." So again, of Newton's Warbler, M. Pollen says that its song resembles that of the Nightingale, but is less varied; while of the Delicate Warbler, he notes that its whistling song is sweet and agreeable.

The native names of these singing birds do not throw much light upon their habits. Three or four species are called *Tekitéky*, probably a name imitative of their cry. One of

* Mr. Wills remarks on this, "I have seen them in the bushes by the side of the forest streams. I doubt their frequenting *high* tree tops."

them (*Ellisia* sp.) is called *Làvasalàka*, or "Long-loin-cloth;" the reason for this odd name is probably from its long tail, the native *salàka* often being allowed to hang down behind, especially if ornamented with beads or embroidery. Another of these birds (Newton's Warbler) is known as *Vóronjózóro*, "Papyrus-bird," and *Vòrombéndrana*, a word of the same meaning, and also *Vòrombàraràta**, "Bamboo-bird," names all no doubt describing its usual haunts. The word *Fítatra*—possibly from a root meaning "expanded, drawn out," and so referring to the duration of the notes of the birds—forms wholly or in part the names of three or four of the Warblers. The very wide-spread name of *Jỳỳ* applied to one of them (*Eroessa* sp.) is doubtless the same as a word meaning "well delivered," or "recited," and so is also descriptive of its song. And another name, *Firìòka*, that of Crossley's Warbler, probably refers to its rapid darting flight, as it is also the name of the Madagascar Swallow, as we shall see presently.

Mr. Cory remarks: "The nest of the *Fítatra* Warbler (*Pratincola sybilla*) is built of small sticks and moss, and is placed, as a rule, on some low bush. Eggs, five to six, blue in colour. The eggs of the *Fítatràla* (*Copsychus specularis*) are similar to those of the *Fítatra*, but larger, and of a lighter blue."

The family Timeliidæ, which includes the Bulbuls, Babblers, and Grass-Warblers, appears to be less remarkable for its powers of song than the one just described. M. Pollen describes the notes of the Madagascar Bulbul (*Hypsipetes madagascariensis*) as "short, monotonous, and intermingled at every moment with the sounds *tuuc-tuuc* and *truit-truit*." Of the White-eye or Bush-creeper, he remarks that "its song is short and sweet, with a slight croak," and a cry resembling the syllables *pilupilu-pilu*. Dr. R. B. Sharpe thinks that there is a curious case of mimicry between one of the Bulbuls (*Tylas eduardi*) and a Shrike (*Vanga polleni*), and remarks that "if these are really two distinct species [as seems undoubted], we

* The *Bàraràta* (*Phragmites communis*, Trin.) is a very tall bamboo-like grass growing in marshes and by water-courses, with sharp needle-like points to its sheathing leaves.

have a case almost unrivalled in interest, the Shrike assuming the plumage of the Thrush to serve him in pursuit of his prey."

As we have already seen in many other cases, some of the names of the birds belonging to this family are evidently imitative of their notes, such as *Tèkitèky* and *Tèkitèkiàla*, names of the White-eyed Babbler and the Fantail Warbler. Another name, with several variations, of some of the Bulbuls, *Tsikoròvana*, possibly comes from a root *ròvana*, "a movement *en masse*," and so would seem to mean that these birds are seen in large numbers*. One bird of this same subfamily is called *Vòromasiaka*, "Ferocious-bird" (curiously enough, this is the one referred to above as being probably "mimicked" by a Shrike; and so possibly the Bulbul has been credited with the rapacity of the Shrike which he resembles); another of them is called *Vòromarénina*, "Deaf-bird;" while the word *bòka*, "leper," also enters into others of their names. As might have been expected, the White-eyes (*Zosterops*) have several names referring to the prominent white ring round their eyes; e. g., *Tsàramàso*, "Beautiful-eyes," *Sipàromàso*, *Pariamàso*, and also *Ramanjèreky*, from a root meaning "to be conspicuous," "to be obvious to the sight." The Fantail Warbler has, among other names, those of *Tily* and *Kitily*, "Watchman" or "Spy."

The White-eye (*Zosterops madagascariensis*) builds a very pretty open nest on the end of some hanging branch. Its eggs are very pale blue.

Two species of Feather-tailed Warblers (*Dromæocercus*) have been found in Madagascar. These birds have curiously formed tails, composed of several long stiff quills, with a very scanty pluming of fine hair-like filaments, and carry them cocked up at a rather high angle from the body. Like most of their congeners, these little birds are of sober brown and grey plumage.

One peculiar species of Tailor-bird has been found in Madagascar. The genus is widely spread over the whole of the Indian Peninsula.

Five species of Butcher-bird (or Shrike proper) are natives

* Mr. Wills says, "They are plentiful, but go in pairs, not in flocks."

of the island, and are all of peculiar genera. Of the curved-beak species (*Vanga*) M. Pollen observes that "it has a strong whistling cry, which is heard at a long distance, but it is melancholy and heart-touching. At intervals it utters a note like *tu-tu*, which often comes from a bird just above the head, and yet seems to proceed from some way off. If the sportsman will only imitate the bird's cry, he will see it, impelled by curiosity, descend from branch to branch until it comes near enough to be shot. These Shrikes lead a solitary life, each one having his own special hunting-ground in the forest. If one of them whistles, all the others in the neighbourhood instantly respond."

It has apparently not yet been ascertained whether these Madagascar Butcher-birds have the habit, followed by their relatives in other countries, of hanging up their prey of mice, small birds, and insects on the thorns round their nest, from which habit, indeed, the genus derives its English name. M. Grandidier, however, says he was told that the male birds of the curved-beak species sometimes eat their own young, though their usual food consists of orthopterous insects. This bird is called *Vòrombèngy*, "Goat-bird," by the forest tribes; and another species is termed *Kìboàla*, "Forest-quail," and *Vòrombènda*, "Rush-bird," as well as other names, the meaning of which is obscure with our present knowledge of provincial Malagasy.

Most of these Shrikes are greenish blue in colour, with white or grey on the breast and underparts of the body.

Of the family of Paridæ or Titmice, only one species inhabits Madagascar—the Coral-billed Nuthatch, a small tree-climbing bird, blue and brown in colour, which Dr. Sharpe terms "one of the most curious birds extant." It appears to connect the true Titmice and the Nuthatches, into which two subfamilies the Paridæ are divided. Nothing further seems at present known of this little bird, nor does its name of *Sakòdy* throw any light on its habits or peculiarities.

The family of Nectariniidæ, or Sun-birds, contains three species in Madagascar of these beautiful little songsters; one

of them, the Glittering Sickle-billed species, belongs to a genus (*Neodrepanis*) peculiar to the island. It is well known that many of the birds of this family rival in the Old World the gem-like and metallic tints of the Humming-birds in the New World, and this is true of the Madagascar Sun-birds. Of the *Nectarinia notata*, M. Pollen observes: "These charming birds live in flocks, and are almost always found together with the other species of *Nectarinia* and with one of the Warblers (*Eroessa* sp.). All day long one sees them darting among the branches of the trees and about the flowering shrubs, from which they suck with their long tongue the nectar which forms their principal food. They also feed on insects and on the fruit of the banana and the mango. Their song is long, very agreeable, but little varied; now and then they utter a cry resembling that of our Sparrow. These Sun-birds have the habit of suspending themselves by their claws from the small branches, like the Titmice. During the hottest part of the day they revel in the burning rays of the sun, loving to preen their plumage, which has been wetted by the heavy morning dews which fill the calyxes of the flowers. The nest of this bird is in the form of a pocket with a lateral opening, and these are usually found hanging from the extremity of a branch of some species of mimosa. They are constructed of small roots, dry leaves, and fine lianas, and are lined with spider's web. It is a curious fact that more males than females of this bird are always seen."

Mr. Cory observes here: "I have not myself noticed the excess of males over females among the Sun-birds; and I fancy, if people only took the trouble to look, they would always find somewhere in the vicinity of the cock-bird his less gaudy mate. Does not the male lose his brilliant colours in the winter, like the *Fody* (Cardinal-bird)? I am not quite certain myself."

- Of the other species of *Nectarinia*, M. Pollen says that he has seen it "particularly abundant in the plains near Anòrontsànga (N.W. coast), and it constantly utters its note, which resembles that of a Woodpecker. Its chief food is the

nectar of the flowers of the *Acacia lebbek*"*. The male bird of this species is exquisitely coloured with metallic tints of purple, green, red, and yellow. The other species is black underneath, with green and purple metallic reflections on head, neck, back, and wings. The single species of *Neodrepanis* is yellow underneath, with green metallic colour above. Dr. R. B. Sharpe says that "this Sun-bird is evidently the type of an entirely new genus, and is undoubtedly distinct from every Sun-bird known to me or represented in the (British) Museum." As its English and scientific names imply, its beak is very sharply curved.

These Sun-birds are of service in promoting the fertilization of some of the Madagascar trees, especially of the Traveler's-tree (*Ravenala madagascariensis*). Mr. G. F. Scott Elliot says: "The flowers are often visited by Sun-birds; *Nectarinia souimanga* was the commonest near Fort Dauphin. The correct position of the bird is to sit on the highest bract, and then to bend forwards and downwards to suck the sugary liquid by introducing its beak below the odd petal. In doing this it will explode a virgin flower, dusting its breast with pollen, while in older flowers it will touch the stigmatic surface, and so effect cross-fertilization. Sometimes it hops into the middle of the flower, however, and tries to reach the honey from the same bract by bending round the petals. Beetles and hymenoptera often visit the flowers to suck the sugary liquid which exudes over the edges of the bract. They will only produce fertilization by accident, however, while the narrow curved beak of the bird is excellently adapted to pass between the edges of the rigid bracts and suck the honey" †.

In the second chapter of this article, when speaking of the Woodpecker-like birds (see above, p. 226), we saw that some little reference is made to the Sun-bird in Malagasy folk-tales as having a melancholy note. The native names for these beautiful little birds almost all consist wholly or in part of the word *Sòy*, the meaning of which is at present unknown ;

* Probably a mistake for *Albizia lebbek*.

† 'Annals of Botany,' vol. iv. no. xiv. p. 261 (May 1890).

but we find *Sòikèly*, "Little Soy;" *Sòimànga*, "Beautiful Soy;" *Sòiangàly*, "Capricious Soy;" and also *Dandiana*, possibly meaning "Stepper." The word *Sòy* is also reduplicated in another name, *Sòisòy*.

Coming to the next family, Hirundinidæ, we find in Madagascar only two species—a Swallow and a Sand-Martin, both peculiar to this island. Of the first of these, M. Pollen observes its flight is very rapid, resembling that of the European Swallow. He also says: "I saw at Ambasòana a large flock of Swallows gathering together to set off for another part of the country. This flock formed a perfect cloud of birds; for ten minutes or so they darted backwards and forwards over the plain; they then immediately directed their course for the south-east, all uttering simultaneously the same cry."

Some of the native names for this Swallow evidently refer to its rapid flight, and contain the root *rìotra*, "rushing, passing rapidly," as in *Kiriondànitra*, "Sky-rusher," and *Firìotsàndro*, "Day-rusher." It also shares the name of *Sidintsìdina*, the "Flier," *par excellence*, with its distant relatives the Swifts (see above, p. 227).

The only species of the next family (Motacillidæ) in our list is the Yellow-bellied Wagtail, which is tolerably common along the streams in all parts of Madagascar. In its habits and appearance it seems to differ little, if at all, from the European species. It is often called *Fandafàsika*, "Sand-stepper," a name it shares with a species of Sandpiper, which is also very plentiful. Its other names (*Trìotrio*, *Trìotriotsa*, &c.) are probably imitative of its cry.

We now come to the Weaver-birds, of which four species are found in Madagascar.

As will be seen by the Tabular List (p. 441), there are three species of Weaver-birds called by the Malagasy *Fòdy*, either in its simple form or compounded with some other word*. The most common as well as prominent

* The meaning of the word *Fòdy* I am unable to explain; probably it is one of the many names which the Malagasy brought with them from their distant fatherland.

of these is the Fòdy or Cardinal-bird (*Foudia madagascariensis*), which lives in companies of from six to a dozen individuals, but is often seen in very large flocks near the rice-fields and plantations, where it does much damage to the crops. "The Tanàla, or forest people," says Mr. Baron, "during the whole time of the ripening of the rice, are obliged to guard their rice-fields from the attacks of these Fòdy by rattles and slinging of stones." As the rainy and hot season approaches, which is also the breeding-season with the vast majority of Malagasy birds, the male Fòdy changes colour from its ordinary sober coat of brown to a brilliant scarlet, with the exception of the outer wing-feathers and the tail; so that as it darts about in the sunlight it looks like a living flame. At the pairing-time, *i. e.* in October and November, the male birds, which seem more numerous than the females, pass the time in fierce conflict for the possession of the hen birds. M. Pollen says: "I have sometimes seen these Fòdy fighting with such fury that they have fallen from high above the trees to the ground, still fighting as they fell. At this time one may see the male bird perched on the highest part of a tree, uttering his monotonous cry of *spit-spit*. Immediately a hen bird appears in the neighbourhood he puffs out his plumage, erects his tail, and beats with his wings. He then pursues the hen bird with a rapid and direct flight until he either overtakes her or another male bird appears on the scene. In such case a combat ensues between the two, during which the hen bird escapes. The nest has almost the form of a pear, with a lateral opening, and is made of fine grass attached to three or four twigs of a mimosa, a tamarind, or a flamboyant tree. The eggs are from four to six in number, and are greenish blue in colour. The parent birds feed their young for a long time after they have quitted the nest." Mr. Cory tells me: "I once caught a young Fòdy in a spider's web; and Mr. Gregory obtained a Kingfisher in the same way."

Being so plentiful and conspicuous, it is not to be wondered at that the Fòdy, at least the male bird, or *Fòdilàhimèna*, as they call it (*i. e.* "Red-male-Fòdy"), has long

attracted the attention of the Malagasy, and is frequently alluded to in their folk-tales, proverbs, and children's games. Of the first of these classes of native wisdom, one or two examples have been already given in speaking of other birds (see above, p. 226); of the proverbs referring to this bird, the following may serve as specimens:—"Do not forbid to eat, like a Fòdy," probably meaning that the bird eats so much rice that there is little left for the owner. The same voracious habit is again referred to in the saying: "It is not right to act like a Fòdy when the rice is ripe: tasting before the owner." Again, presuming to be equal to one's betters is reproved in another proverb, which says: "A Rice-bird (*Tsikiriti*) going together with a Fòdy: it is not the leader, but only a follower."

Of the two other species of Fòdy less seems to be known, since they are more strictly confined to the forest regions, as one of their names of *Fòdiàla*, or "Forest Fòdy," recognizes. The Sàkalàva Weaver-bird is termed *Fòdisay*; or "Lesser Fòdy:" the male bird has a yellow head and neck, the rest of the body being brown; while the hen bird is entirely pale brown. The Pensile Weaver-bird, as its name implies, builds a beautiful and ingeniously constructed hanging nest, shaped like an inverted chemical retort, which is suspended from the extremities of the branches of the trees, and usually over a running stream. These nests are about a foot or fourteen inches long, the bulb giving ample room for the eggs or nestlings, and the tube, forming the entrance from below, being about four inches in diameter. In the upper forests these nests are usually found singly, but in the lower forest and coast regions M. Grandidier says that they may be seen from thirty to forty in number, all hanging from a single tree. (Mr. Baron, however, tells me he is confident that the Weaver-birds building their nests in the numbers here described are a different species from the one in the interior, and that their nests are not retort-shaped. They are also extremely tame, and build near the villages.) The native name for this species, *Fòdifètsy*, i. e. the "Crafty Fòdy," recognizes this skill of the bird in thus protecting its young.

Its colour is slaty black, with yellow throat and neck, and the male bird has a black head.

The Tsíkirity is a bird of the same family as the Fòdy, but of a different genus (*Spermestes*) and much smaller. M. Pollen remarks of it: "This charming little bird goes in flocks of from twenty to forty in number in the cultivated districts of the country. All day long one may see them in large numbers crossing with rapid flight the rice-fields, which they visit chiefly at the sowing time and in harvest. [They are also said to pull up the newly-planted *kètsa* or rice-plants.] They feed also on all kinds of seeds, especially on that of the chamomile. The whistling cry of this bird is like the syllables *spiti-spiti*, whence comes one of its provincial names. The places where the native women pound their rice are regularly visited by these birds, which feed upon the grain which falls from the rice-mortars and the winnowing fans. One may often see a score of these Tsíkirity perched on a branch, and squeezed so closely together that one might take them to be glued one to the other." This little bird is much more plainly coloured than the three other Weaver-birds, its plumage being dark brown, the breast only having a warmer tint of reddish brown. Mr. Cory remarks: "I should have said that the Tsíkirity was, in colour, greenish brown on the back, lighter on the breast, with dark, almost black, markings on the throat, and I always look upon it as a pretty bird. It builds almost everywhere, like our English Sparrow, in thatch, or trees, or old nests. Have you noticed how they fly in little 'bunches' and in perfect order? If the leader rises, all rise."

Two species of the Starling family are found in Madagascar, both belonging to genera peculiar to the island. Of the first of these (*Hartlaubia*), M. Grandidier says that it is intermediate between the Starlings, with which it is connected by its external characteristics and habits, and the Thrushes, to which, in the skeleton, the *Hartlaubia* shows great similarity. It is a large brown bird, with a monotonous chirp like that of a Sparrow. They often perch together on a branch so closely that half a dozen or more may be killed with one shot.

Like the European Starling, they are excellent eating, provided they are taken at the proper season. Their name of *Hòtsa* throws no light on their habits; neither do their other names of *Vòrontainòmby*, "Ox-dung-bird," and *Vòrontàinànòmby*, "Ox-land-bird," add much to our knowledge of their peculiarities.

The other bird of this family found in Madagascar also belongs to a genus peculiar to the island (*Falculia*), and is described as "a very aberrant form of Starling." It may be termed the "Robed (or Cloaked) Starling," from its specific name *palliata*. During Mr. Cowan's travels in the Bàrà country, he says that on the banks of a small stream joining the Mánanantànana, "we were in search of the *Falculia* Starling. This bird gave us some little trouble. Sitting quietly on the branches, often high up, it kept uttering its plaintive but melodious notes, while we strained our eyes to catch a glimpse of it. Many times it happened to be sitting just before our very noses, but even then we failed to see it. This bird and the *Vànga* Shrike, both with bright plumage, are most tantalizing in this way."

Next to the Starlings comes one of the most curious and interesting in the whole avifauna of Madagascar from its abnormal structure and remote affinities—the *Euryceros prevosti*, or "Prevost's Helmet-bird." The zoological affinities of this remarkable genus were for a long time a puzzle to ornithologists, who successively placed it among or near the Toucans, the Hornbills, the Swallows, the Crows, and the Starlings. It is, however, allied to the Starlings and the Swallow-Shrikes (*Artamidæ*), and is not far from the Drongo-Shrikes, but is yet so different that MM. Grandidier and A. Milne-Edwards have formed a special family, which they name *Eurycerotidæ*, for this solitary genus and species. Dr. R. B. Sharpe classes it with the Crows, but calls it a "unique and curious form." This bird is remarkable for a beak formed like a very capacious helmet, strongly compressed and swelled towards the base, which advances to just as far as the eyes; and its very convex edge is terminated by a sharp hook, which projects beyond a large tooth-like point.

This extraordinary form of the beak is seen best perhaps in the skeleton, in which the beak is seen to be considerably larger than the skull. The bird is as large as a Starling, velvety black in colour, and with a saddle-shaped patch of light brown on the back extending to the base of the middle tail-feathers. This is probably alluded to in a Sàkalàva name for the bird—*Fòndrampòry*, "Yellow-rumped." The large beak is steely blue in colour, and is described by Mr. Crossley as pearly, like the inside of an oyster-shell, but the tints fade away soon after death.

One species of Lark is a native of Madagascar, and is very common on the bare downs of the interior provinces. In habits and appearance this bird is very much like the European species, but its song is less full and varied. After hovering some time, it may be seen mounting up in the air to a great height, uttering its trilling notes, as if in salute to the rising sun, and then letting itself fall suddenly to the ground. Seeds and insects, especially grasshoppers, form its chief food. This Lark is not at all shy, but is difficult to obtain, as it hides in the dry grass, which it exactly resembles in colour—a greyish brown. The eggs are laid in a slight hollow in the ground, quite exposed to observation, the protective resemblance of the hen bird to its surroundings preserving them from danger. M. Grandidier says that this Lark is most pugnacious, and that if two male birds are enclosed in a cage they fight furiously, until the combat ends in the death of one of them.

Many native proverbs refer to the *Soròhitra*, the Hova name for this Lark, some of which are obscure, but the following seem to refer to its peculiar flight already mentioned: "A Lark falling in the forest, because it doesn't know how to fly" (lit. "is a fool in flying"); "Thrown at, but not to be eaten, like a Lark on a grave." The unprotected state of the young birds when the hen is driven off the nest is referred to in the following: "A Lark's nestlings by the roadside: I did not cast them off, but they were forsaken by their mother." The Hova name appears to be derived from a root *ròhitra*, meaning "to go with a rush," or "to go in

Tabular List of Madagascar Birds.

(TABLE III.)

English Name.	Scientific Name.	Hova or General Name.	Provincial Malagasy Names.
Order III. PASSERES. (PERCHING BIRDS.)			
Family CORVIDÆ. (CROWS.)			
White-necked Crow	<i>Corvus scapularis</i> *.	i Goàika (T, N. Btm., Antk. *).	i Gâgâ (Bts., Ba.).
Family ARTAMIDÆ. (SWALLOW-SHIKES.)			
Bernier's Swallow-Shrike	OBOLIA BERNIERI.	.....	.....
White-headed Swallow-Shrike.	ARTAMIA LEUCOCEPHALA.	.....	Remàvo, Tseátéky (N.S.).
Anne's White-headed Swallow-Shrike.	ARTAMIA ANNE.	.....	Remàvo, Tsétéký, Trétréký (N.S.).
Two-coloured Swallow-Shrike.	CYANOLANIUS BICOLOR.	.....	Fôndra, Pôry, Sârahêsa (N.S.), Raisâsatra (Btm.).
Green Straight-winged Swallow-Shrike.	LEPTOPTERUS VIRIDIS.	.....	Fantsâsatra (Bts., Ba., T.), Soroânja, Vôrontsâsatra (N.S.), Vântsatra (Tm.).
Red Swallow-Shrike	LANTZIA RUFA.	.....	Sikétriala (Btm.).

Family *DICEURIDÆ*. (DRONGOS.)

Fork-tailed Drongo.....

Edolus forficatus.
Railóvy (N.S.).Railombo (*Bts.*, *Ba.*, *T.*),
Railôngra (*T.*), Andóvy
(*Ba.*), Drôngo, Tsàramàso
(*N.B.*), Raidôngo (*Tm.*).Family *CAMPORHAGIDÆ*. (CUCKOO-SHRIKES.)

Ashy Cuckoo-Shrike

Graucalus cinereus.
.....Vórontaniómby (N.S.), An-
gavè (*N.B.*),
Androbakè
(*S.E. Co.*).Family *MUSCICAPIDÆ*. (FLYCATCHERS.)

Brown-tailed Flycatcher

Newtonia brunneicauda.
.....Trètrémavo (*Bts.*), Trétré
(*T.*), Ketékété (*N.B.*), Kí-
tikítika (*E. Co.*).

Ward's Flycatcher

Pseudobias wardi.
.....

.....

Singétra (*Bts.*, *Ba.*, *T.*;
Tm.), Tsilangétra (*T.*), Tsi-
kètry (*N.B.*), Sikèty (*N.S.*,
N.B.).

Changeable Flycatcher

Terpsiphona mutata.
.....

Ramanjèrika †.

* As in the first part of this paper (above, p. 228), the names in small capitals show the genera and species of birds peculiar to Madagascar. The initials and contracted words are substitutes for the names of the different Malagasy tribes: see p. 203.

† Another Flycatcher, *Platystira affinis*, has been taken on the W. coast; but M. Grandidier believes it to be only a solitary example, brought over by a hurricane from Africa, and not a true denizen of Madagascar.

(TABLE III., continued.)

English Name.	Scientific Name.	Hova or General Name.	Provincial Malagasy Names.
Family TURDIDÆ. (THRUSHES.)			
Imèrina Thrush	<i>Cossypha IMERINÆ.</i>	.....	Oliôly (<i>Bts., Ba., T.</i>).
Sharpe's Thrush	<i>Cossypha SHARPEI.</i>	.....	Vòrompòotra (<i>N.S.</i>).
Delicate Warbler	<i>EROESSA TENELLA.</i>	.....	Jily (<i>Bts., Ba., T., N.S.</i>), Tsim., Tsitsy (<i>N.S.</i>), Tseré (<i>N.B.</i>).
Larger Delicate Warbler	<i>EROESSA MAJOR.</i>	.....	Tèkitéky (<i>N.S.</i>), Borétiky, Paréty (<i>N.B.</i>).
Madagascar Warbler	<i>ELLISIA MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	Lâvasalâka.	.....
Fern Warbler	<i>ELLISIA FILICUM.</i>	.....	.....
Lantz's Warbler	<i>ELLISIA LANTZII.</i>	Parètika (<i>Ba., T.</i>).	Andréta (<i>Bts.</i>), Andrétika (<i>N.S.</i>), Taméfé (<i>N.B.</i>), Ka- bânty (<i>Anik.</i>).
White-browed Warbler	<i>Copsychus ALBOSPECULARIS.</i>	Fitatrâla (<i>Bts., Ba., T.</i>), Tsim.)	Todîa (<i>N.B.</i>).
Magpie Warbler	<i>Copsychus PICA.</i>	Fitatrâla (<i>Bts., Ba., &c.</i>).	Todiana (<i>N.S.</i>), Sikitily (<i>Anik.</i>).
Newton's Warbler	<i>Calamoherpe NEWTONI.</i>	Vòronjòzoro.	Vòrombéndrana (<i>Bts., T.</i>), Vòrombàrarâta (<i>Ba.</i>), Tèki- tèky (<i>N.S.</i>), Vòrongéndra (<i>Tm.</i>).
Crossley's Warbler	<i>MYSTACORNIS CROSSLEYI.</i>	.....	Firoka (<i>Bts.</i>), Sòratrâla (<i>Ba., N.S.</i>).

Madagascar Stonechat	<i>Pratincola SYBILLA.</i>	Fitatra (Bts., Ba., N.B., Tm.).	Fitatónona (T.), Tèkitésky (N.S.), Féta (N.B.), Fòditàny (T.).
Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>CROSSLEYIA XANTHOPHRYX.</i>	.....	.....
Family TIMELIIDÆ. (BULBULS.)			
Madagascar Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	Tsikoròvana, Horòvana (S. and S.E.).	Sòkorèva (N.S.), Sokónina (Tm.).
Edward's Bulbul	<i>TYLAS EDUARDI.</i>	.....	Vóromasiaka (Bts.), Bókamèna (Ba.), Andévakoròva (T.), Kànkimàvo (N.S.).
Madagascar Bulbul	<i>TYLAS MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	.....	Mòkazàvana (Bts.), Bókazàvo (Ba.), Vóromarèna (Stk.).
Belted Bulbul	<i>TYLAS STROPHIATUS.</i>	.....	Fòditàny (Bts., T.), Sírontsíróna (N.S.).
Madagascar Babbling Thrush	<i>OXYLABES MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	.....	.....
Ashy-crown Babbling Thrush	<i>OXYLABES CINEREICRIPS.</i>	.....	Trátiraka (Bts., Bim.), Jobè (N.S.).
Bernier's Babbling Thrush	<i>BERNERIA MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	.....	.....
White-eyed Babbling Thrush	<i>BERNERIA ZOSTEROPS.</i>	.....	Farifotra (Bts.), Tèkitékiàla (N.S.), Trátiraka (N.B.).
Madagascar White-eye	<i>Zosterops MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	Pariamàso.	Sipàromàso (Bts.), Siay (Ba., T.), Sòy (N.S.), Tsàramàso, Ramanjèrèky (N.B.), Mangrike (T.).
Madagascar Fantail Warbler	<i>Cisticola MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	Tsintsina.	Kijòsa (Bts.), Tily, Kitily (Ba.), Vinty (T.), Tèkitéky (N.S.), Kabánty (Ardk.).

(TABLE III., continued.)

English Name.	Scientific Name.	Hova or General Name.	Provincial Malagasy Names.
Brown Feather-tailed Warbler.	<i>DROMEOCEBUS BRUNNEUS.</i>	.....	Seroka (<i>Ba.</i>), Sèrika (<i>Ba., T.</i>).
Seebohm's Feather-tailed Warbler	<i>DROMEOCEBUS SEEBOHMI.</i>	.....	.....
Granddier's Tailor-bird.....	<i>Orthotomus GRANDDIERI.</i>	.....	.....
	Family LANIIDÆ. (BUTCHER-BIRDS.)		
Madagascar Butcher-bird	<i>CALICALICUS MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	.....	Tôitirosoy, Kiboala (<i>Bts.</i>), Tsikatòkatòka (<i>T.</i>), Titikorosy, Fitiitâtéma, Vòrombènda (<i>N.S.</i>).
Curved-beaked Butcher-bird ..	<i>VANGA CURVIROSTRIS.</i>	.....	Vànga (in all dialects), Vòrombèngy (<i>T.</i>).
Lafresnay's Butcher-bird	<i>XENOPIROSTRIS LAFRESNAYI.</i>	.....	Tsilovànga (<i>T.</i>).
Van Dam's Butcher-bird	<i>XENOPIROSTRIS DAMI.</i>	.....	.....
Pollen's Butcher-bird.....	<i>XENOPIROSTRIS POLLENI.</i>	.....	Kinkimaoro (<i>S.E. Co.</i>).
	Family PARIDÆ. (TITMICE.)		
Coral-billed Nuthatch.....	<i>HYPOSSITA CORALLIROSTRIS.</i>	.....	Sakòdy (<i>N.B.</i>).
	Family NECTARINIIDÆ. (SUN-BIRDS.)		
Sòimànga Sun-bird.....	<i>Nectarinia SOUTMANGA.</i>	Sòisòy (<i>Ba., T.</i>), Sòikèly.	Anatsòy (<i>Bts.</i>), Sòy (<i>N.S., N.B., Tm.</i>), Anjòy (<i>T.</i>).

Noted Sun-bird	<i>Nectarinia NOTATA.</i>	.....	Dandiana (<i>Bts.</i>), Ramanjona (<i>T.</i>), Sôy (<i>N.S.</i>), Soiangaly (<i>N.B.</i>)
Glittering Sickle-billed Sun-bird	NEODREPANIS CORUSCANS.	.....	.....
Madagascar Swallow	Family HIRUNDINIDÆ. (SWALLOWS.) <i>Phœdina MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	Kiriondànitra.	Firinga (<i>Bts.</i>), Firo (<i>Ba.</i>), Firotsandro (<i>Ba.</i>), Fimo (<i>T.</i>), Sidintsidina, Manavy (<i>N.S.</i>), Tibériranga (<i>Im.</i>), Firinga (<i>Bts.</i>)
Cowan's Sand-Martin	<i>Cotile COWANI.</i>	.....	.....
Yellow-bellied Wagtail	Family MOTACILLIDÆ. (WAGTAILS.) <i>Motacilla FLAVIVENTRIS.</i>	Fandiafasika.	Triotriotsa (<i>Bts.</i>), Triotrio (<i>Ba.</i>), T, Seritsé (<i>N.B.</i>)
Sakalava Weaver-bird	Family PLOCEIDÆ. (WEAVER-BIRDS.) <i>Ploceus SAKALAVA.</i>	.....	Fôdisay (<i>N.S.</i>), Fôdisiay (<i>Bts.</i> , <i>Ba.</i> , <i>T.</i>), Fôdisè, Fôdiàla (<i>N.S.</i>), Fôdisaina (<i>Im.</i>)
Pensile Weaver-bird	<i>Ploceus PENSILIS.</i>	Fodifetsy.	Fôdisay (<i>N.S.</i>), Fôdisiay (<i>Bts.</i> , <i>Ba.</i> , <i>T.</i>), Fôdisè, Fôdiàla (<i>N.S.</i>), Fôdisaina (<i>Im.</i>)
Madagascar Cardinal-bird	<i>FOUDIA MADAGASCARIENSIS.</i>	Fôdy.	Fôdy or Fôdimèna in all the dialects.
Dwarf Rice-bird	<i>Spermestes NANA.</i>	Tskirity.	Tsipiritika (<i>Bts.</i> , <i>N.S.</i>), Sàkapia (<i>Ba.</i> , <i>T.</i>), Tsiampiro (<i>T.</i>), Tsiigoritsy (<i>N.B.</i>)

(TABLE III., continued.)

English Name.	Scientific Name.	Hova or General Name.	Provincial Malagasy Names.
Madagascar Starling	Family STURNIDÆ. (STARLINGS.) HARTLAUBIA MADAGASCAREN- ENSIS.	.....	Iiôtsa (Bts.), Vórintainómby (T.), Vórintainanómby (N.S.), Bérítanómby (N.B.).
Robed Starling	FALCULIA PALLIATA.	.....	Vóronjaza (Bts., Ba., N.S.), Kazazaka (Btm.), Fitihsisiáiy (N.S.).
Prévost's Helmet-bird	Family EURYCEBOTIDÆ. (HELMET-BIRDS.) EURYCEROS PRÉVOSTI.	.....	Sikétribé (N.B.), Fòndram-pory, Vórontsarahèsa (S.).
Hova Lark	Family ALAUDIDÆ. (LARKS.) <i>Alauda HOVA.</i> Soròhitra.	.....	Vórosóy (Ba.), Boria (Ba., T., N.B., Tm.), Kòlokòlotány (N.S.), Siròtsy (N.B.).
Boddaert's Philepitta	Family PHILEPITTIDÆ. (PHILEPITTAS.) PHILEPITTA JALA.	.....	Variamanàngana (Bts.), Asity (T., Bts.), Tsóitsóy (N.B.).
Schlegel's Philepitta	PHILEPITTA SCHLEGELI.	.....	Asaity (N.S.).

companies." Its Sakalava name of *Kòlokòlotàny* apparently refers to its nesting on the bare ground—from *kòlokòlo*, "cherished, cared for," and *tàny*, "earth, ground." Mr. Cory says: "The Lark, I should say, was the commonest Malagasy bird, and more numerous than the Fòdy, also by no means difficult to obtain."

The long list of Madagascar Passeres is closed by the two species of the very peculiar genus *Philepitta*, which, as mentioned above, constitute by themselves one of the few families of the Oligomyodian group of the Order found in the Old World. I regret to be able to say but little of these rare birds. The colours of *Philepitta jala* are in the adult male almost black, but in the younger birds they are black, beautifully mottled with yellow. The male has a curious green caruncle stretching all round the head above the eyes*. In the other species, *P. schlegeli*, the same colours are found, but the canary-yellow tint is unmixed on the neck, breast, and belly, the dark colour being confined to head, wings, and tail. The native names for these birds are obscure in meaning, throwing little light upon their habits; one perhaps, *Tsòitsóy*, is imitative of their cry.

[To be continued.]

XXXVIII.—*Diagnoses of new Species of Birds from Central East Africa.* By R. BOWDLER SHARPE, LL.D., F.L.S., &c., British Museum.

IN the next number of 'The Ibis' I shall, with the Editor's permission, continue my detailed account of my friend Mr. F. J. Jackson's collection. For the present I content myself with giving some diagnoses of species which I have satisfied myself, by a visit to the Museums of Berlin and Frankfort †, are not yet described.

* My friend Rev. J. Wills tells me, "The female is lightish brown, with mottled breast, much like an English Thrush, and altogether unlike its mate. The native name is *Ramanjèrika*, which is given by you (in error, I think) to *Terpsiphone mutata*, but which is also called by the *Ilava Sikèty*."

† When Mr. Hartert was in London last spring he identified a little