

upon the Eagle's broad back, rose gayly over his head, repeating the maneuver as often as the baffled "King" attempted to get above him. Ever afterward the Eagle was properly respectful in the presence of the mite of a Wren that had outwitted his majesty. Many forms of this myth appear, and sometimes the statements are given as facts. Thus it is hard to tell whether or not DuPratz believes the story he tells in his "History" to account for the Kingship of Le Roitelet in Louisiana. In America we do not regard the Wren with special kindness; but in Great Britain, it is scarcely ever spoken of without some gentle, loving epithet; and the word "poor," "little," "tiny," or "dear" is constantly joined to the prefix Jenny, Kitty, Titty (*cf. antè Tit*), Jintie, or Chitty when naming it.

In *Titlark* (*Anthus ludovicianus*) we again have the prefix "small." *Lark* is a condensation of two ancient words in Anglo Saxon (*læw*, "craft," and *werca*, "a worker") which meant a worker of guile; and the etymologists tell us "the name points to some superstition which regarded the bird as of ill omen." In the Scotch form *Lavrock* or *Laverock* a near resemblance to the old Icelandic *læviriki* (meaning the same as above) is to be seen. As for *Pipit* or *Pipit Lark*, common terms, the word is derived from the same root as the verb *to peep* (like a young bird's cry) and hence a word describing its somewhat feeble chirp. In my long list of local American names for this species occur the following: *Titlark*, *Prairie Titlark*, *Lark*, *Skylark* (Dist. of Col.), *Louisiana Lark* (and many other old book-names); *Brown Lark*, *Red Lark*; *Wagtail*, *American Pipit*, *Alouette Pipé*, etc., etc.

DESCRIPTION OF A HYBRID SPARROW (*ZONOTRICHIA ALBICOLLIS* + *JUNCO HIEMALIS*).

BY CHARLES H. TOWNSEND.

On December 12, 1882, Mr. William L. Baily shot the bird here described near Haverford College, Montgomery County, Pa. Mr. Baily suspected it to be a cross between the White-throated Sparrow (*Z. albicollis*) and the Snowbird (*J. hiema-*

lis), and recently left it with me for further examination. Having compared it with specimens of these species I fully agree with him as to its hybrid nature, since it bears the prominent characters of each bird. The specimen (a male) was shot in company with the above named species, both of which are quite common here this winter.

I indorse the views of Mr. William Brewster, in regard to *Helminthophaga leucobronchialis* and *H. lawrencei*, and his explanation of several obscure species of North American birds on the grounds of hybridity (this Bulletin, Vol. VI, pp. 218-225). Hybridity is by no means of frequent occurrence among our native Passeres, and a case of it between different *genera* of the *Fringillidæ* is of more than passing interest, but the hybrid does not warrant a special name, as some ornithologists have thought.

Description: Intermediate in size between *Z. albicollis* and *Ț. hiemalis*. Bill, nearly the size of that of *Z. albicollis*, but colored like that of *hiemalis*. Throat as in *albicollis*, breast and belly as in *hiemalis*. Tail of ten feathers, outer pair white, with the basal third dark; second pair with a small white spot on inner vane; other tail feathers dark, pale-edged above. Upper plumage mainly like that of *Z. albicollis*, but suffused with the slaty color of *Ț. hiemalis*; white spot from nostrils to eyes. Wing-coverts white-tipped, as in *Z. albicollis*, and edge of wing faintly yellowish. Length about 7.50; wing and tail, 3. Male.

[Through the kindness of Mr. Townsend I have been able to examine the hybrid above described, which combines in nearly equal degree the characters of *Junco hiemalis* and *Zonotrichia albicollis*. The black bands on each side of the crown are narrower and less distinct than in the latter and the superciliary line is represented merely by a white spot above the lores. There is a faint maxillary stripe. The black streaks of the interscapular region are much narrower than in *Z. albicollis*, and the rufous edgings of the feathers are suffused with slate; there is also less rufous on the wings, and the rump and upper tail-coverts are also more olivaceous, and the tail is darker.

This example, taken in connection with the hybrid Swallow described sometime since by Mr. Trotter in this Bulletin (Vol. III, pp. 135, 136, July, 1878), is of the highest interest, as intimated by Mr. Townsend, as throwing light on certain obscure Audubonian species known thus far only from the single examples on which the species were based, and makes the second known case of hybridity between species of quite distinct genera among our Oscine birds. Doubtless the *Helminthophaga cincinnatiensis*

Langd, believed by Mr. Ridgway (see this Bulletin, Vol. V, p. 237) to be a hybrid between *Helminthophila pinus* and *Oporornis formosa*, may be counted as a third example of like character, to say nothing of the several probable cases cited by Mr. Brewster in the paper above referred to by Mr. Townsend.—J. A. ALLEN.]

NOTE ON EXCEPTIONS TO THE LAW OF INCREASE
IN SIZE NORTHWARD AMONG NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS.

BY J. A. ALLEN.

The law of increase in size northward among North American birds and mammals is so much the rule that the exceptions to it are conspicuous from their rarity. In considering some years since the few strongly marked examples among mammals of the converse of this law I was led to formulate the following propositions:

“(1) *The maximum physical development of the individual is attained where the conditions of environment are most favorable to the life of the species.* Species being primarily limited in their distribution by climatic conditions, their representatives living at or near either of their respective latitudinal boundaries are more or less unfavorably affected by the influences that finally limit the range of the species. . . .

“(2) *The largest species of a group (genus, sub-family, or family, as the case may be) are found where the group to which they severally belong reaches its highest development, or where it has what may be termed its centre of distribution.* In other words, species of a given group attain their maximum size where the conditions of existence for the group in question are the most favorable, just as the largest representatives of a species are found where the conditions are most favorable for the existence of the species.

“(3) *The most ‘typical’ or most generalized representatives of a group are found also near its centre of distribution, outlying forms being generally more or less ‘aberrant’ or specialized. . . .*”*

*“Geographical Variation among North American Mammals, especially in respect to size.” Bull. Geol. and Geogr. Surv. Territories, Vol. II, No. 4, July, 1876.