

island. His observations on the flightless Rail (*Dryolimnas aldabranus*) are particularly interesting.

Thirteen of the birds collected by Dr. Abbott in these islands have been previously described as new by Mr. Ridgway<sup>1</sup>, and the name *Turtur abbotti* is here proposed for the Seychelles form of *T. picuratus*.

An Appendix gives a useful tabular list, showing the distribution of the 212 birds known from the entire Madagascan group of islands, from Mauritius to Comoro, and a bibliography.—F. M. C.

**Robinson's Birds of Margarita.**<sup>2</sup>—In 1876, when the Smithsonian Institution sent Mr. F. W. Ober to make collections of birds in the Lesser Antilles, there were only two of the larger islands of the Caribbean basin, Cuba and Jamaica, of whose avifauna we possessed anything approaching a complete knowledge. It is an indication of the activity shown in ornithological research during the past twenty years that the island visited by Lieut. Robinson was the only one in the whole West Indian and Caribbean group which had not been more or less explored by ornithologists. Margarita, like Trinidad, is a continental island and has derived its avifauna from Venezuela, from which it is distant only seventeen miles. It is forty-two miles long and twenty and one-half miles wide in its greatest dimensions. The southern shore in the vicinity of Porlamar, where Lieut. Robinson landed, is "flat or gently rolling" and grown with scrubby thorn trees, cacti, etc. "About three miles inland foothills begin, which rise by leaps to a central peak, 3,240 feet in height," a sufficient height to condense the moisture of the warm trade-winds, giving a rainfall which produces a heavy forest.

Lieut. Robinson had only sixteen days' collecting on Margarita, but the fact that he began half an hour after landing is good evidence that he made the most of this time. He worked both in the dry coast region and in the mountain forests, securing 200 specimens and recording 73 species.

Of a number of these interesting biographical notes are given. Thus the calls of *Eupsychortyx pallidus* resemble those of our Bob-white, a marked instance of the stability of call-notes and suggesting common ancestry; *Bucco bicinctus* nests in holes in the dwellings of termites; the Buff-breasted Hummingbird feeds in part on fruit and has a song of decided character, and *Myiarchus tyrannulus*, like our own *Myiarchus*, uses a cast-off snake skin for home decoration, evidence of the antiquity of a habit which has doubtless persisted long after its cause has ceased to

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<sup>1</sup> Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XVI, 1893, pp. 4, 597-599; XVII, 1894, 371-373; Auk, XI, 1894, 74.

<sup>2</sup> An Annotated List of Birds Observed on the Island of Margarita, and at Guanta and Laguayra, Venezuela. By Wirt Robinson, First Lieutenant, Fourth U. S. Artillery, with Critical Notes and Description of New Species, by Charles W. Richmond, Assistant Curator, Department of Birds. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XVIII, 1896, pp. 649-685, one map.

be potent. *Chordeiles acutipennis* is said to flit along the road at dusk and alight in front of the traveller; a rather unusual habit for a Nighthawk. Is it not possible the bird observed was *Nyctidromus*?

Mr. Richmond has made good use of Liéut. Robinson's collection, adding numerous critical notes and describing no less than ten species as new, most of which are apparently pale island forms of mainland species; they are the following: *Butorides robinsoni*, *Eupsychoptyx pallidus*, *Leptotila insularis*, *Scardafella ridgwayi*, *Speotyto brachyptera*, *Doleromyia pallida*,<sup>1</sup> *Amazilia alicia*,<sup>2</sup> *Dendroplex longirostris*, *Quiscalus insularis*, *Cardinalis robinsoni*,<sup>3</sup> and *Hylophilus griseipes*.

In conclusion lists of birds identified during a few days' stay at Guanta and Laguayra are given.—F. M. C.

**Cherrie on San Domingo Birds.**<sup>4</sup>—Of all the West Indian islands, San Domingo is least known ornithologically. Cuba, Jamaica, and Porto Rico, of the larger islands, have had resident naturalists who have made us acquainted with the fauna of their homes, while the smaller islands could be explored by an energetic collector during a few months' visit. It may be safely said, therefore, that only in San Domingo and Hayti alone is there a probability of discovering birds new to science. Students of the West Indian avifauna will thus welcome this paper by Mr. Cherrie, whose ability as a collector has been proved in other fields.

In an interesting introduction, descriptive of his travels in the island from January to May, 1895, there is abundant evidence that patience, experience, a fever-proof constitution, and enthusiasm were needed to carry the trip to the successful conclusion which the succeeding pages record, while a record of 210 bird-skins in five days' collecting show that material results are not wanting.

Mr. Cherrie's list of only eighty-three species betrays the poverty of an insular avifauna, but of these we have numerous interesting observations on notes and habits. *Dulus dominicus* is stated to build one large nest which is used by a number of females; *Nesocites micromegas* often resembles some Warblers in actions, while *Chloronerpes striatus* is a Sapsucker. Our Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) is probably a summer resident in San Domingo, a considerable extension of its known breeding range, which was previously supposed to be from Florida north-

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<sup>1</sup> Previously described in 'The Auk,' XII, 1895, 369.

<sup>2</sup> Previously described in 'The Auk,' XII, 1895, 368.

<sup>3</sup> Previously described in 'The Auk,' XII, 1895, 370.

<sup>4</sup> Field Columbian Museum. Publication 10. Ornithological Series, Vol. I, No. 1. Contribution to the Ornithology of San Domingo. By George K. Cherrie, Assistant Curator of Ornithology. Charles B. Cory, Curator of Department. Chicago, U. S. A., March, 1896. 8vo. pp. 26.