

fault in my present contention, I hope to be promptly set right by some one who may be able to see further into the intricate matter than I can. I will put the case in the following shape:

1. The genus *Strix* Linn., S. N., I, 10th ed., 1758, p. 92, included, of course, all Owls known to him. *S. aluco* Linn., *ibid.*, p. 93, sp. No. 6, is the Barn Owl, as shown by the references. But how does this fact make *S. aluco* of 1758 the "type" of *Strix*? There are no "types" of Linnæan genera which included more than one species, except by some subsequent process of restriction by elimination at the hands of some other author.

2. The species *Strix aluco* of Linn., S. N., I, 12th ed., 1766, p. 132, No. 7, is the Wood Owl, a bird of a different modern family from *S. aluco* of 1758.

3. Meanwhile, between the dates 1758 and 1766, the Linnæan genus *Strix* was first subdivided, by Brisson, in 1760; and Brisson made *S. stridula* the type of his restricted genus *Strix*. This act placed the Wood Owls in the genus *Strix* Briss., 1760, and threw the Barn Owls out of the genus *Strix* Linn., 1758. As a further consequence, the family to which the Wood Owl belongs is Strigidae.

4. The first tenable generic name for the Barn Owls appears to be *Aluco*, Fleming, Philos. Zool., II, 1822, p. 236; and if so, the family to which the Barn Owls belongs is Aluconidae.

5. It seems to me, therefore, that our two families of Owls should stand as they have stood in my 'Key' since 1884, and not as they do in the A. O. U. List.

I may add that Professor Newton, Ibis, 1876, pp. 94-104, reached the same conclusion, which he also maintained in Dict. B., 1894, p. 673. This is the more remarkable, inasmuch as he employed a somewhat different course of reasoning, not taking Linnæus back of 1766, and thus differing from the A. O. U. Code. But I think my own argument is strictly according to the Code.—ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*

The 'Churca' (*Geococcyx californianus*).—The 'Land of Sunshine,' XI, No. 6, Nov., 1899, contains a translation (from Docs. para la Hist. Mexico, 4th ser.) of certain Memorias para la historia natural de California, written by an anonymous Franciscan priest in the year 1790. Among the birds noted is the following:

"The *Churca* is a kind of pheasant which has a long bill, dark plumage, a handsome tail and *four feet*. It has these latter facing outward in such a fashion that when it runs it leaves the track of two feet going forward and two going backward."

If we read "toes" for "feet," this quaint description is unmistakably that of the Roadrunner or Chaparral Cock, as the editor of the Magazine, Mr. Charles L. Lummis, remarks in a footnote; and the notice antedates by many years the scientific description of *Saurothera californiana* by Lesson in 1829.—ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*