

peculiar satisfaction in naming Tolmie's Warbler after Audubon had mistaken it for another species.

Townsend can scarcely be censured for failing to localize many of his types more definitely than "Columbia River," since the country was unsettled by the whites and few localities named; but now there can be little excuse for the stereotyped "Columbia river—Fort Vancouver," as the type locality for more than a dozen species described by him or by Audubon for him; especially when the forested area and definite dates or even approximate time of the year, are mentioned. It should be well known that during the most of the autumn of 1834 and the spring and summer of 1835, Townsend made the brig "May Dacre" his headquarters and that many of his types were undoubtedly taken in the immediate vicinity. This vessel was moored bow and stern to a natural wharf of basalt known as Warriors' Point, near the lower mouth of the Multnomah or Willamette river, Oregon, from which Wyeth transferred his stores to Fort William.—FRANK L. BURNS, *Berwyn, Pa.*

Letters Concerning Wallace, Newton and Tristram.—It was my pleasure sometime since to pick up from a New York book-dealer two volumes bearing the book plate of Canon Tristram. They were presentation copies of Wallace's 'Geographical Distribution of Animals' given by the author to Tristram. They had not been cut completely, and in them were two letters to the noted former owner that may be of interest to ornithologists. The first was from Alfred Russell Wallace, the second from Alfred Newton. That from Wallace follows:

The Dells, Grays, Essex.
January 13th. 1874

My dear Tristram

If you should happen to be in Europe I hope you will be able to spare me half an hour to look over the enclosed rough list of genera of SYLVIIDAE and put it a little into shape.

I am trying at a book on Geog. Distributions of *Animals*. As it is a large subject, I treat mainly of *Families*,—& of course I want to know what are the limits of each *family*, & what genera most naturally go in it. Now taking the following families to be *Families*, and to be near each other: Turdidae, Sylviidae, Muscicapidae & keeping Motacillidae quite apart, the question arises what are the limits of *Sylviidae?*, & I believe you can answer this question as well as any man. I therefore turn beseechingly to you.

I have put down on the accompanying paper,—1st. all the genera of Sylviidae in Jerdon's '*Birds of India*' (omitting Motacillinae) 2nd. some additional European genera. 3rd. Additional African genera, from Sharpe's Catalogue, 4th. Australian genera said by Jerdon to be probably *Sylviidae*.

Now you would greatly oblige me by,—1st. crossing out all genera which are not *Sylviidae* & saying *what* they are: 2nd. bracketing together

all names which you think are *subgeneric* so as to form *natural genera*. 3rd. adding any Sylviine genera omitted: 4th. arranging the whole into what you consider *natural groups*, or subfamilies by numbering or otherwise.

As *no two* writers appear to agree about this family I am hopelessly puzzled, & if you will guide me, I shall implicitly follow you.

With kind remembrances to Mrs. Tristram

Believe me

Yours very faithfully

Alfred R. Wallace"

Rev. Canon Tristram.

The envelope is postmarked at London—E. C. 12 JA 2[?] 74. It is addressed to "Revd. Canon Tristram F.R.S. | Greatham Vicarage | West Hartlepool | *Durham*."

Much racier, but far less readable,—owing to the chirography—is the letter from Alfred Newton bearing on the same subject but written nearly fourteen years later. After the lapse of years Tristram evidently is curious still as to the relations that puzzled Wallace. The Newton letter follows:

22 Oct. 1887[?]

"MAGDALENE COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE

My dear Tristram

I have just got your letter (but too late to answer by tonight's post) & thank you for the hints therein contained.

I doubt if any one can at present make a satisfactory division between *Turdidae*, *Sylviidae*, & *Muscicapidae*—still your proposed grouping is to my mind far better than that of the B. M. 'Catalogue'—not that even this opinion is to be thought very favourable, for the arrangement of the B. M. 'Catalogue' is simply disgraceful. I am sure it would be more to the credit of ornithologists if they would frankly admit their inability to classify some groups, & put their disputed genera as I have suggested in alphabetical order. It is not a question of "shirking" a difficulty [;] it is honestly owning its existence & the impossibility of coping with it in our present state of opinion.

I question whether *Gerygone* is of the *Sylviidae* at all—but time will shew. *Miro* &c I think are, & *Saxicolina* at that.

Bradypterus & *Eremomela* are genera on which I can't venture to pass an opinion. *Cisticola* seems as if it required more than generic separation—*Regulus* I hold to be nearest to *Phylloscopus* &c. I have been told that the position it holds in the B. M. 'Cat.' is due to its having been wholly forgotten at the proper time!

What would you give as the distinguishing characters of your Family "Accentoridae"? For the life of me I have never been able to understand the fuss people have made about keeping them in *Sylviidae* [.]

Copsychus, *Cittocincl*a, (please don't write "*Kittacincl*a") & *Thamnobia* are Turdine in many respects—but equally Sylviine in as many more—It is just these & a few other forms which incline me to merge the two so-called "Families."

As for nest-building, *Hypolais*—not *Hippolais* by the way, since (as Bonaparte said) "il ne s'agit point de chevaux!"—is as wholly different from *Phylloscopus* as its eggs, & indeed so far as I know everything except its being a "leaf-bird" in habits and having a coloration to match.

Within limits, the more genera you suppress the better. I will send for the proof of my article [;] I only wish I could delegate the writing of it to you.

I can't understand your saying in 'The Ibis' that your specimen of *Zosterops praetermissa* had not been in spirits. All Bewsher's collection to the best of my recollection came in spirit, because he could not himself skin & had not a skinner with him in Anjuan!

Yours very truly
Alfred Newton.

We have a young * * * come here who has an eye for birds. A few days ago he fished out a *Dafila spinicauda* in the market, which was not bad of him, though he thought it was a hybrid between Pintail & Widgeon. It is said to have been shot at Lynn, but I don't want to put it into the "British" list."

Mention of the article in 'The Ibis' is in reference apparently to H. B. Tristram's "On an Apparently New Species of *Zosterops* from the Island of Anjuan, Comoro Group" (The Ibis, October, 1887, p. 369). The collection of birds mentioned is apparently that of C. E. Bewsher, 1879. The row of asterisks indicates the name of a noted British ornithologist. The date of the article on *Zosterops* species? serves to confirm the uncertain chirography of Newton's date as here given.

Interwoven as the letters are with one of the greatest works of one of the greatest zoologists, and giving some clear views of the back of the stage machinery it would seem unfair to withhold them from the public.—A. L. PICKENS, 208 East Washington Road, Greenville, S. C.