

The work will be issued in about ten parts, in 4to, each containing six plates, with corresponding letterpress. The first part will appear next September. The price of each part will be twelve florins.

Yours, &c.,
PELZELN.

SIRS,—In my paper on *Trachyphonus* (*antea*, p. 109) there is a misprint, which I beg of you to allow me to correct. Under *Tr. boehmi* is given, as a locality, "Abdul Gindi, (Mus. Paris)." Now Abdul Gindi is the name of an Egyptian person, not of a locality. M. Oustalet informed me that the specimen in question was obtained from Abdul Gindi.

Yours, &c.,
G. HARTLAUB.

Bremen, 20th April, 1886.

74 Jermyn Street, St. James's,
May 17th, 1886.

SIRS,—I have lately returned from a pleasant two months' sojourn in Egypt and at Athens, during which a few ornithological facts came under my notice which I think worth recording in 'The Ibis.' I left Naples on 25th of January last by an Italian steamer bound for Malta. On the morning of the 27th I found myself in the harbour of Catania, with a few hours to spend on shore. I went at once to the bird-market, and there saw no less than ten Purple Gallinules (*Porphyrio cæruleus*) exposed for sale, which the vendors told me came from the *pantani*, or marshes, a few miles to the south of Catania. About two hours later I went back to the market, before returning to the steamer, and found that two more Porphyrios had been brought in. I bought two of the best specimens for a franc each, took them with me to Malta, and there skinned them.

After staying a week at Malta I went by P. & O. steamer to Port Said, and through the Canal to Suez. In the Canal

I was struck by the vast number of Gulls which closely followed our ship, and scrambled for pieces of bread which I amused myself by throwing to them. I was also struck by the fact that the majority of these Gulls were *Larus canus*, a species I had never previously met with in Egypt. Mixed with these were a smaller number of *Larus leucophæus* and *Larus ridibundus*. I also saw a few pairs of *Larus ichthyæetus*, but these majestic birds did not condescend to follow our ship or take any notice of the bread thrown to their smaller relatives.

At Suez, where I stayed two days, I noticed the same absence of Passerine birds as on former visits; the ubiquitous Sparrow and the obtrusive Grey Crow (*Corvus cornix*), which swarm in all other parts of Egypt, were nowhere to be seen; the only Passerine birds were *Motacilla alba* and *Corvus umbrinus*, which last species is, I think, more abundant at Suez than anywhere else in Egypt. Thence I went to Cairo, and stayed there from February 12th to March 1st, when I went up the Nile to Thebes. At Cairo I used frequently to spend the half hour before and the half hour after sunset in the beautiful Esbekyeh garden. In the centre of this is a lake, over which, up to sunset, a quantity of Swallows, *Hirundo savignii*, were always flying about, catching insects. Evening after evening I used to see a large Sparrow-hawk, *Accipiter nisus*, which, from its size, I judged to be a female, make its appearance just before sunset, while the Swallows were still flying about. Of these it never took any notice, having perhaps found out by experience that they were more trouble to catch than they were worth; but it would perch on the top of some tree commanding the lake and wait till the sun had set and the Swallows taken themselves off, and in their place a swarm of small Bats came on the scene, flitting about over the lake. Now was the time for the Hawk's supper, and it used to dash in among the Bats, catch one in an instant, take it off to a tree, and there eat it; and it generally found time to catch a second one before it got too dark for further operations. I once went under the tree where the Hawk was eating its Bat, and picked

up one of the Bat's wings which it had dropped. So far as I know, this Bat-catching propensity of the Sparrow-hawk has never before been recorded.

The trees round this same lake in the Esbekyeh garden were frequented by numerous large Fruit-bats, which began to move about half an hour after sunset, and which I never saw elsewhere in Cairo, or in any other part of Egypt. This fact, although not exactly ornithological, is not altogether devoid of interest, for I fancy that the presence of a Fruit-bat in Egypt has escaped the notice of most recent travellers in that country.

The Red-breasted Goose, *Bernicla ruficollis*, is not now found in Upper Egypt, and, with the exception of one specimen obtained by Mr. Stafford Allen at Alexandria, I do not know of any instance of its having been seen anywhere in Egypt in recent times. I was therefore much interested in finding this species accurately and repeatedly represented in the tombs of the kings at Thebes, the figures of it being carved in the limestone walls of the tomb, and accurately coloured, so that there can be no doubt whatever as to the species intended to be represented*.

I left Egypt on March 24th, and went direct to Athens, where I stayed ten days. The ornithological fact that struck me most at Athens was the great number of Ravens, *Corvus corax*, in and around the city. They roost in the precipitous sides of the Acropolis, and may be seen flying over the town all day, but more especially towards evening. Returning home one afternoon from a drive to Eleusis, I saw, just before sunset, at least thirty or forty Ravens all together, flying round a rocky hill about two miles from Athens, on which they no doubt roosted. Never in any country have I seen the Raven so abundant as at and around Athens.

Yours, &c.,

E. CAVENDISH TAYLOR.

* [Cf. Yarrell's Brit. Birds, ed. 4, vol. iv. p. 284.—EDD.]
