

species what now appears to be an old one, there was, as I have shown, every excuse for such an error of judgment.

Yours &c.,

British Museum (Natural History),
May 1st, 1900.

W. R. OGILVIE GRANT.

SIRS,—I have lately returned from Palermo, where I made a most pleasant visit to my friend Mr. Joseph S. Whitaker at his beautiful villa of Malfitano. Among the many attractions of the place, one of the most interesting is the new Zoological Museum, situated in the beautifully wooded grounds, close to the villa, which was opened on the first day of the current year, 1900. On visiting the museum, after ascending a short flight of white marble steps, and passing through a vestibule, one enters a spacious hall or gallery, illuminated by top-light. Ranged round the walls of this hall are large glass cabinets, containing mounted specimens of Italian and Sicilian birds; also some collections of small mammals from Sicily, Tunis, and Marocco, and two cabinets containing birds' eggs. On the walls are some magnificent heads of red deer from North Italy, and a good collection of gazelle- and antelope-heads from Tunisia. Among other trophies which adorn the walls is a fine head of the alpine ibex, killed by Umbert, King of Italy, in the Val d'Aosta, and presented by His Majesty to Whitaker. There is also the head of a fallow-deer, which was shot by Victor Emanuel. In the centre of the hall, directly under the skylight, are ten large cabinets, containing the extensive collection of birds formed by the late Lord Lilford, which was purchased by Whitaker after the death of our late esteemed President, and is preserved intact by its present owner. This collection, which is very complete as regards birds from the Mediterranean district generally, and Spain in particular, is especially rich in Raptores, and can also boast of a very fine series of skins of that rare Gull, *Larus audouini*, of which there are seven or eight fine specimens, all collected by Lord Lilford himself on the coasts of Sardinia. The cabinets containing this large collection are

very crowded, and the specimens are not yet arranged in scientific order.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the Museum, and certainly that in which Whitaker takes chief pride and delight, is the very fine series of Tunisian birds collected by himself during his many expeditions in the interior of the Regency. This collection, which is in the skin, is kept in cabinets in a smaller room adjoining the great hall, which is also used as a study, and is fitted up with libraries. The Tunisian collection, as also a collection from Marocco, contains types of several new species and subspecies, and is especially rich in Larks and Chats, among the latter possessing several specimens of that rare, recently discovered species, *Saxicola seebohmi*. The museum also has its working-rooms and a curator.

Whitaker has also, this year, been again successful in breeding *Porphyrios*. A pair of these birds (*Porphyrio cæruleus* Vandelli) made a nest on the ground among the stems of a clump of bamboos soon after the middle of last March, while I was staying at Malfitano. The nest was rather large, and was constructed chiefly of dry bamboo-leaves. I was never able to see the eggs, for from the time the first egg was laid one of the parent birds, and occasionally both, was always on the nest. I have since heard from Whitaker that the brood has been successfully hatched.

Yours &c.,

E. CAVENDISH TAYLOR.

Florence, April 20th, 1900.

SIRS,—Although not a member of the B. O. U., I have for many years been a subscriber to 'The Ibis,' and possess the entire set from 1859 to the present date. This is my excuse for taking the liberty of offering a suggestion which will, I think, make your publication more useful to subscribers abroad.

It is only a small matter in connection with your valuable "Notices of Recent Ornithological Publications"—viz., that you should insert at the end of the title of book mentioned