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XXXI.—Supplementary notices regarding the Dodo and its Kindred. Nos. 4, 5

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distinctive, I had meditated calling it *Maria*, in remembrance of my late talented little niece, who had assisted me so much in my natural history studies, by collecting specimens and getting up facts relating to the instincts and habits of the objects I noted or described. *Maria* was with me in Manchester when I procured the green-backed swallow (your *Hirundo euchrysea*), and we visited together in the very district where this new *Trochilus* was found; but I hesitated about the adoption of her name, from the impossibility of putting it in any other way than as '*Trochilus Maria*,' though *T. Cora* and *T. Mango* might reconcile me to it. [Other examples, as *Anna*, *Sappho*, &c., might also be added.] I leave the matter in your hands, but would suggest that the specific soubriquet should be considered undetermined, till fresh specimens be obtained."

A figure of this specimen appears in my 'Illustrations,' Part xiii. plate 22.

XXXI.—*Supplementary Notices regarding the Dodo and its Kindred.* Nos. 4, 5. By H. E. STRICKLAND, M.A., F.G.S.

[Continued from p. 139.]

4. *The Dodo applied to Heraldry*.—I am indebted to the Rev. Richard Hooper, of St. Stephen's, Westminster, for obligingly calling my attention to what may be called the heraldic department of the Dodo-history. The introduction of such a subject into a scientific journal would require apology were it not certain that many a curious fact of history, both physical and civil, may be disentangled from the quaint devices of armorial pageantry. It now appears that besides the "human Dodos" referred to by a witty (yet scientific) writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* (Jan. 1849, p. 81), a family has existed in modern times, bearing the synonymous name of Dronte, and decorated with a Dodo on their armorial shield. Could we now trace out the whereabouts of this family, we might possibly elicit from their archives some original facts connected with the present matter. All my inquiries about the Dronte family have indeed hitherto been fruitless, but I hope that this notice may induce heraldic students to throw light on the subject. The passage to which I here refer is contained in the '*Academy of Armory and Blazon*' by Randle Holme, published at Chester in 1688; book ii. ch. 13. p. 289. The Rev. J. Baron of Queen's College, Oxford, has kindly afforded access to a copy of this rare work in the library of that college, and has enabled Mr. Delamotte to engrave the following facsimile of the heraldic device. This figure seems to have been copied, with a little alteration, from that contained in the rare edition of Bon-

tekoe (see 'Dodo and its Kindred,' p. 63), but the description is evidently taken from Clusius, *Exotica*, cap. iv. The author judiciously points out the discrepancy between the colour of the wings as given by Clusius and Bontius, which is explained by Dr. Hamel ('Der Dodo,' &c. pp. 25, 34) to have arisen from a mistranslation of the original Dutch of Van Neck.

It is remarkable that although Holme takes his description from the works of Clusius and Bontius, yet his figure is copied from neither, but is taken from a third, and wholly independent, source. This seems conclusive as to the actual existence of a family bearing these arms; for had they been Holme's own invention, he would naturally have copied the figure from one of the two works which furnished him with the description. So now to our author.



"He beareth Sable a *Dodo*, or *Dronte* proper. By the name of *Dronte*. This exotic bird doth equal a *Swan* in bigness, and is of some authors termed *Gallus Peregrinus* and *Sygnus Cucullatus*, a *Hooded Swan*; yet it is of a far different shape. For the head is great, covered (as it were) with a certain membrane, resembling a hood. The bill is thick, and long, yellow next the head, the point black; the upper chap is hooked at the end, the lower chap had a blew spot between the yellow and black. It is covered with thin short feathers, and wants wings; in stead thereof it hath four or five long black feathers; that the hinder part of the body is round, flat, and fleshy, wherein for the tail were four or five small curled feathers, twirled up together, of an ash colour. The legs thick and short with long sharp pointed toes, yellowish; claws black. Thighs covered with black feathers, the rest of the body grey. Yet *Bontius*, lib. 5. chap. 17. in his *History of India*, describes it to have a great ill-favoured head, covered with a membrane like a hood; the bill bluish white, the tips of the upper mandible black, the lower yellow, the body is covered with soft grey feathers; the soft feathered wings of a yellowish ash colour; legs yellowish, and both them and the toes set with broad scales."

5. *Stones in the stomach of birds, indicative of frugivorous habits*.—In the 'Dodo and its Kindred,' p. 43, it is stated that

"stones are only swallowed by frugivorous birds, which require them to triturate their food, and are never found in the gizzards of the Raptores." Hence it was argued, that the Dodo, which is known to have had stones in its stomach, could have no affinity to Raptorial birds. Dr. G. Dickie of Aberdeen has however called my attention to a passage in Sir J. C. Ross's Antarctic Expedition, which shows that the above generalization, though undoubtedly true in general, admits, like all rules, of an exception. It is there mentioned (vol. ii. p. 159) that stones were usually found in the stomachs of the *Aptenodytes Forsteri*, to the amount of two to twenty lbs. weight. This is certainly a remarkable fact in the case of a piscivorous bird, and indicates some peculiarity in its habits which it would be desirable to clear up. Do any of the fucivorous Fish swallow pebbles to help digestion, and can the Penguin have thus acquired these foreign matters at second hand? But whatever be the cause of this habit in the Penguin, it does not affect the argument as to the remoteness of the Dodo from the Raptorial birds.

XXXII.—*Contributions to the Botany of South America.*

By JOHN MIERS, Esq., F.R.S., F.L.S.

[Continued from p. 146.]

BRACHISTUS.

A PARTICULAR group of plants has been before alluded to under this name (*ante*, p. 144), most of which have been referred to *Witheringia* by Prof. Kunth, and from which genus I have shown that they differ by having a campanular calyx generally with an almost entire margin, which does not enlarge with the fruit, by a much smaller berry and other characters. They are also distinct from *Acnistus* by the calyx being generally entire on the margin, rarely 5-toothed, and not having the five strong prominent nervures which give to the calyx of the latter genus the appearance of an almost pentangular tube: they differ also in the much shorter tube of the corolla, a more rotate border, more dilated stamens arising from a triangular expansion at the base, as in *Hebecladus* and *Saracha*; their flowers are considerably less in size, and they have smaller berries, which exhibit a very thin membranaceous dissepiment, not thickened in the middle by the confluence of the placenta, as in *Witheringia*, *Acnistus*, *Iochroma*, *Saracha*, &c.; the placenta on the contrary, originating from a central line in the middle of the dissepiment, are thin and slender, projecting for a short distance at right angles into the cavity of the cell, and then become furcated, continuing mem-