

And, again, in his review of my "Birds of New Zealand," in the "New Zealand Magazine," p. 99, Captain Hutton says:—"We must take exception to the Kiwi being considered as the living representative of the Mōa, or as Dr. Buller puts it in his preface, 'the only living representative of an extinct race.' No doubt the Kiwi and the Mōa have several features in common; but it is certain that both the Emu and the Cassowary are far more nearly related to the Mōa than is the Kiwi." It will be interesting to the meeting to learn that Professor Mivart has recently read a paper before the Zoological Society of London, on the axial skeleton of the Struthionidæ, which effectually settles the question at issue. The learned professor pointed out that, judging by the characters of the axial skeleton, the Emu presents the least differential type, from which *Rhea* diverges most on the one hand, and *Apteryx* on the other; that the resemblance between *Dromæus* and *Casuarinus* is exceedingly close, while the axial skeleton of *Dinornis* is intermediate between that of *Casuarinus* and *Apteryx*; its affinities, however, with the existing New Zealand form very decidedly predominating.

It will be seen, therefore, that I was fully justified in referring to the existing species of *Apteryx*, as "the diminutive representatives of colossal ornithic types that have disappeared."

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ART. XXI.—Remarks on Dr. Finsch's Paper on New Zealand Ornithology.

By WALTER L. BULLER, C.M.G., D.Sc.

[Read before the Wellington Philosophical Society, August 7, 1875.]

I HAVE read with interest Dr. Otto Finsch's valuable contribution to the last volume of the "Transactions," (pp. 226-236,) which is merely a precursor of his promised "Synopsis of the Birds of New Zealand," and I find we are still at issue on several points:—

1. *Stringops greyi* is undoubtedly a mere variety of *S. habroptilus*. It is no more entitled to recognition as a species than the handsomely marked specimen in Brogden's Collection, of which I have recorded a description. ("Trans. N. Z. Inst.," Vol. VII., p. 201.)
2. I do not believe in the existence of *Acanthisitta citrina*, Gmelin. The plumage of *A. chloris* differs in the male, female, and young.
3. I entirely dissent from Dr. Finsch's present view that the so-called *Orthonyx albicilla* and *O. ochrocephala*, of the North and South Islands respectively, belong to "totally different families." In one of his earlier articles ("Journ. für Orn.," July, 1870), he

- expressed his conviction that they belonged not only to the same family, but to "the same genus." (See my Notes, pp. 203-204, "Trans. N. Z. Inst.," Vol. VII.)
4. In a former paper ("Trans. N. Z. Inst.," Vol. V., p. 207) Dr. Finsch pronounced *Myioscopus longipes* and *M. albifrons* to be hardly separable, but he now acknowledges that he has never examined the latter species. The two birds are quite distinct, and represent each other in the North and South Islands.
  5. Dr. Finsch appears to consider *Gerygone sylvestris* a good species. Unfortunately, Mr. Potts has not deposited his type with the rest of his collection in the Canterbury Museum, and I am unable to qualify my former opinion respecting it.
  6. Dr. Finsch professes to put the synonymy of our New Zealand Godwit right; but it was I who did this, as the following passage will show:—"Drs. Finsch and Hartland, in their excellent work on the birds of Central Polynesia, have correctly referred our bird to the species described by Mr. Gould under the name of *Limosa uropygialis*; but as will be seen on reference to the historical synonymy given above, this name has no claim whatever to recognition. There are no less than five recorded names of antecedent date; and in settling questions of nomenclature, I shall, as far as possible, adhere to the established rule of adopting in every case the oldest admissible title. There can be no doubt that this was the species originally described (Naum Vög. Deutschl., viii., p. 429—1836) as, *Limosa baueri*; and I have accordingly restored its original name. But even supposing that, as the authors already cited have contended, Naumann's description is too vague to fix the species, and that Gray's *L. brevipes* is open to the same objection, then *Limosa Novæ Zealandiæ* (Gray) would undoubtedly stand in reference to a name bestowed by Gould at a later period."—"Birds of New Zealand," p. 199.)
  7. Dr. Murie has cleared up the question of *Rallus modestus* being distinct, by an examination of the skeleton. (See Prof. Newton's Notes, Trans. N.Z. Inst., Vol. VII., p. 511.)
  8. A comparison of Gray's type of *Eudypetes pachyrhynchus* with the specimens of *E. chrysocomus* in the British Museum satisfied me that they ought to be united. With regard to *E. nigrivestis*, I think I am right in stating that Mr. Gould, who distinguished the species, agreed with me that it could not stand.

9. I do not admit Dr. Finsch's new Penguin from Akaroa Heads *Eudyptula obloignata*, and I feel sure that on receiving a larger series of specimens, he will himself relinquish it.
10. Dr. Finsch's observations on the coloration of *Apteryx haasti*, in which he declares that it "entirely agrees with *Apteryx oweni*, and is by no means darker, as Dr. Buller says," is another instance of the danger of generalizing from a single specimen. There is now an example of *Apteryx haasti* in the Canterbury Museum, in which the chestnut coloring is almost as dark as in *Apteryx mantelli*.

There are other points on which I am hardly inclined to agree with the learned author, but I have no wish to provoke a controversy by pursuing the subject further.

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ART. XXII.—Remarks on various species of New Zealand Birds, in explanation of Specimens exhibited at meetings of the Wellington Philosophical Society, 1875-6. By WALTER L. BULLER, C.M.G., D.Sc., President.

1. On varieties of *Carpophaga Nova Zeelandiæ*.

DR. BULLER exhibited two remarkable specimens of the New Zealand Pigeon (*Carpophaga Nova Zeelandiæ*.) One of these was a beautiful albino, the entire plumage being of a pure milk white, the small wing coverts alone presenting a slight tinge of yellowish-brown; bill and feet carmine red. It was obtained in the Wairarapa by Mr. Keleher, who has presented it to the Colonial Museum. The other specimen was a partial albino, shot by Capt. Mair, of Tauranga, and presented to the exhibitor. In this bird the shoulders, back, rump, and upper tail coverts have a rich appearance, the white predominating. Some of the wing feathers and their coverts are wholly white, with bronzed edges and clouded with grey, while others again present the normal coloration. The distribution of colors, however, is quite irregular, the white largely predominating in the right wing. In remarking on these specimens, Dr. Buller referred to some other accidental varieties described at page 158 of his "Birds of New Zealand," and more particularly to an example presented to him by Mr. Edward Hardcastle, of Hokitika (now in the Colonial Museum), in which the head, neck, fore part of the breast, and all the upper parts are pale yellowish-brown, more or less glossed with purple; the wing coverts and scapulars stained towards the tips with coppery brown; the quills and tail-feathers uniform pale yellowish-brown, tinged with vinous, the tips of the latter paler.