

## NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

*Falconry in the East.\**

WERE it not that the author is so proud of his knowledge of oriental tongues that he thinks it desirable to display the said knowledge by a constant admixture of *Indiancee* words with his narrative, this would be a most agreeable addition both to the Zoology and Falconry of the East: but when a man is so delighted with having made out that "goolab," in some of the thousand and one dialects in which India rejoices, is the equivalent of yellow in English, that he must needs prate of a hawk's having a "goolab eye," we find his affectation all but insufferable, and devoutly wish that he were confined to the use of plain English for the remaining term of his natural life. We breathe this aspiration with the more especial zest, because we see that the lieutenant has good matter in him—matter which he is willing to impart, and which he would be more able to impart were it not for this strange conceit. It is true that he renders back into English every word that he has first rendered unintelligible to Englishmen: thus, a foot-note informs us that "goolab" is yellow; "kawla" a crow; "bazdar" a falconer; "kang" a crow; "div sapid" the white fiend; "laza" hit; "maloon" the cursed, &c.; but this clanjamfry of words is perpetually distracting the attention, without giving a crumb of information that any one except Elihu Burritt would care to pick up.

Having relieved our mind by this free expression of opinion; and having risked his indignation thereby; we shall probably find the author making us his quarry and flying his tooruratee with the goolab eye at us, as though we were a khargosh or a karotittar on a pippal in a shikargah of his own: indeed, to speak freely and more in the Anglo-Saxon vernacular, our criticisms may perchance induce him to administer to us a literary drubbing, like that which he has bestowed on the offending editor of the 'Athenæum.' But to our tale: here is a specimen of our author's style, and a very animated specimen too, one at which none of our readers will cavil.

"We were jogging very prettily, I began to think, along the beaten track of oriental conversation, when our course was arrested by an unforeseen incident. Instead of the occasional cawings and croakings of crows, to which the ear of the Indian traveller by habit speedily

\* 'Falconry in the Valley of the Indus.' By RICHARD F. BURTON, Lieut. Bombay Army. London: Van Voorst, 1852.

becomes deaf, suddenly arose such a din of corvine voices, such shrieks and such a clashing of wings above and around us, that not one of the conversationists or the listeners but that turned his head. The crow is a kind of sacred bird amongst the Hindoos, which fact accounts, in some degree, for his uncommon impertinence. He is fed at certain seasons with boiled rice and other delicacies, so that he never, at any time, can witness the operation of cooking with the slightest attempt at patience. I have seen him again and again swoop at a dog, and carry off a bone which he persuades the hungry brute to drop, by a sharp application of his stout, pointed bill upon its muzzle. At times I have expected to be attacked myself by the friends and relations of the deceased, when, after half an hour's dance with St. Vitus to the tune of some villanous old scout's croak, I disposed of the musician by an ounce of shot. And if you wish to enjoy a fine display of feathered viciousness, order your servant to climb up a tree full of crows, and to rob the nearest nest. At such seasons it is as well to stand by with a loaded gun or two, otherwise the sport might end in something earnest to the featherless biped.

"The reason of the row was soon explained. Gaetano had thoughtlessly left a half-plucked chicken preparing for my supper within sight of a sentinal crow, whose beat was the bough of a neighbouring Neem tree. In a moment it was pounced upon, seized, and carried off. On one side all the comrades of the plunderer flocked together to share in the spoils which he resolved to appropriate, and most violent was the scene that ensued. On the other, up rushed the cook, the butler, the khalassis, and all the horse-keepers, as excited as the crows, determined to recover, with sticks and stones, the innocent cause of the turmoil. 'Send in for Khairu, the laghar,' said the ameer, in a whispering voice to Kakoo, as if afraid of being overheard by some listening crow. He certainly thought that if he spoke loud the birds would recognize the name, and really after some study of their idiosyncrasy, I did not treat the precaution of his tone lightly. Æsop had no experience in the character of the Indian 'Kak,'\* otherwise he would not have made the fox outwit the crow.

"One of the attendants rose slowly from the ground, and looking indifferently around him went off by a *détour* towards the palace. Presently appeared two men dressed in green, with a large sheet spread between their shoulders so as to cover their near arms. Behind them came the attendants, carrying a dozen pellet and other bows. The

\* "Kawla or kawwa, a crow."

pellet-bow merits a short description: — it would be a prodigious acquisition in Europe to naughty little boys who delight in breaking their neighbours' windows. It is made of a slip of bamboo, bent in the shape of our ancient weapon; as the old proverb advises, it has two strings stretched parallel to each other from horn to horn. About the centre a bit of canvas or coarse cloth, an inch or an inch and a half in length, is sewn tightly to the two cords, and against it the pellet, a lump of hard clay, about the size of a 'taw,' is firmly held by the thumb and forefinger which draw the bow. By dint of practice the natives of India can use this instrument upon small birds with fatal effect; the range is from sixty to eighty yards. To a tyro the only inconvenience of it is the occasional smashing of the pellet upon the thumb-knuckle of the left hand, an event quite the reverse of agreeable, and which invariably brings on a repetition of itself, in consequence of tyro's nervous anxiety to avoid it.

"The sight of these preparations for destruction in the servants' hands, elicited one long, loud caw from every crow that happened to be looking that way. Instantly those that were on the wing began skeltering in headlong flight through the foliage of the trees towards some safer roosting-place, and the few that were perched, sprang up flapping and shrieking, and following with all speed the example of their fellows. Even the chicken was forgotten in the hurry of the moment.

" 'Let the bone of contention lie under the tree, and if we don't notice them some will be back shortly,' said the ameer. 'Take Khairu into the tent and hide the bows.'

"The veteran falconer was right. About ten minutes afterwards an old crow was descried sneaking behind the plantation, and silently taking up a position in the thickest cover he could find. Then came a second and a third; at last we were aware of the presence of a dozen.

" 'Bring the bird,' whispered the ameer.

"The bazdar\* came softly out of the tent, carrying on his fist Khairu, the laghar,† who was sitting erect, as if mentally prepared for anything, with head pressed forward, and pounces‡ firmly grasping the dasti.§ Her hood was then removed, her leash was slowly slipped, and as one crow bolder than the others lit furtively upon the ground,

\* "Falconer.

† "Laghar, a large kind of hobby hawk.

‡ "The 'pounces,' in the language of falconry, are the bird's talons.

§ "Oriental falconers, instead of a glove, use a small square napkin of wadded cotton, secured to the wrist by a noose, and twisted round the hand, so that the bird sitting on the forefinger may clench it with her talons."

where the half-plucked chicken lay, Khairu, cast off with a whoop, dashed unhesitatingly at the enemy.

“Another tumult. Every Beloch that could handle a bow provided himself with one, and all of us hurried to the open space whence we could descry the evolutions of the birds. At the sight of the hawk, the crow precipitately dropped his prize, and shrieking as usual, skurried through the trees pursued by his stubborn foe. Now all is excitement. The attendants rush about whooping and hallooing, in order if possible to frighten the quarry still more.

“Vainly the crow attempts to make a distant shelter, the laghar hangs close upon him, gaining every moment. Corvus must shift his tactics. Now he attempts to take the air, wheeling in huge circles gradually contracted. But Khairu has already reached his level, another instant a swoop will end the scene. The crow falls, cunningly, as might be expected, presenting his bill and claws he saves himself from the stoop, and having won, as he supposes, distance, cleverly turns over, and wriggles through the air towards his asylum. Already it is near, — a large clump of thorny mimosas, from whose rugged boughs resound the voices of a startled colony.

Khairu, with a soldier's glance, perceives the critical moment, plies her pinions with redoubled force, grapples with her quarry from behind, weighs him down rapidly through the cleaving air, and nearing the earth, spreads her wings into parachute form, lighting with force scarcely sufficient to break an egg.

“The battle is not finished. Corvus, in spite of his fall, his terror, a rent in the region of the back, and several desperate pecks, still fights gallantly. This is the time for the falconer to assist his bird. From the neighbouring mimosas, roused by the cries of their wounded comrade, pours forth a “rabble rout” of crows, with noise and turmoil, wheeling over the hawk's head, and occasionally pouncing upon her, *unguibus et rostro*, with all the ferocity of hungry peregrines. We tremble for Khairu. Knowing her danger, we hurry on as fast as our legs can carry us, shouting, shooting pellets, and anathemizing the crows. We arrive, but hardly in time. As we plunge through the last bushes which separate us from the hawk, twenty cawers rise flurriedly from the ground; the bazdar hurries to his laghar. The quarry lies stone dead, but poor Khairu, when taken up and inspected by thirty pair of eyes, is found to have lost her sight, and to be otherwise so grievously mauled, pecked, and clawed, that the most sanguine prepare themselves for her present decease. Alas, poor Khairu!” —  
P. 5.

The species of hawks used in falconry is a subject in which the zoologist has ever felt an interest, and we offer no apology for introducing at length Mr. Burton's enumeration; premising, however, that it would have been a great boon to us, who admire precision in all things, if he had given the scientific as well as the local names, and thus enabled us to determine the species. It is more than probable that some of the birds are entirely unknown in Europe, but then it is unwise to give them names "familiar as household words" to English ears. If Mr. Burton would kindly take the trouble to look over the Indian birds in the British Museum, and, in the next edition of his book, add the technical name which he will there find attached to them, it will give a greatly increased value to his volume in the eyes of the naturalist. From the following names which he mentions, we can draw no satisfactory conclusions:—

1. "Sherbaz of Bokhara," p. 13.
2. "Bhairi," p. 13; this is considered a synonyme of the peregrine.
3. "Bashah," p. 13.
4. "Ukab," p. 37.
5. "King Curlew," p. 57.

However, here is Mr. Burton's list of hawks.

"The following are the principal varieties of birds generally known to the Scindian falconer:—

"1. The Shabbaz, or hawk-king, a large gray goshawk with yellow eyes, caught in the hills of Afghanistan and its surrounding regions, brought down to the plains, and sold, when well reclaimed, trained, and in good condition, for £5 or £6. The tiercelet or male is, as usual, much smaller than the female, and is called Jurrak, in Persian 'the active.' Both are uncommonly strong and ferocious. They are accounted the noblest birds: the Sher-baz ('lion-hawk') or peregrine of Bokhara and the snowy regions, being all but unknown here.

"2. The Bahri (Bhairi), or *Falco calidus*, so celebrated amongst Indian falconers for her boldness and power, and her tiercel, here vulgarly called the Shahin, are found in some parts of the province. They fly at partridges, hares, bustards, curlews, herons, and the Saras; \* being long-winged hawks or birds 'of the lure,' † they are taught to fly high, to 'wait on' † the falconer and to 'make the point.'

\* "The Indian crane, a splendid bird, sometimes standing six feet high.

† "Hawks are of two kinds:—1. Birds of the lure, or the long-winged. 2. Birds of the fist (because they fly from thence instead of swooping from the air), or the round-winged.

‡ "The perfection of a falcon in Europe is that her pitch be as high, her range as

" 3. The Bashah, a kind of sparrow-hawk, and her mate the Bashin, a small, short-winged, low-flying bird, with yellow eyes and dark plumage in her first year, which afterwards changes to a light ash-colour, marked with large gray bars, are very much valued here on account of the rapid way in which they fill the pot, especially with partridges. As they remain in Scinde during the cold weather, and retire in summer to the hills around, those trained are 'passage hawks,' or 'birds of the year;'<sup>\*</sup> their low price, 8s. or 10s., makes it scarcely worth while to mew them, † so they are let loose when the moulting season commences.

" 4. The Shikrah, and her tiercel the Chipak, are our common English sparrow-hawks. They are flown at partridges, and by their swiftness and agility afford tolerable sport. At the same time they are opprobriously called 'dog-birds' by the falconer, on account of their ignoble qualities, their want of staunchness, and their habit of carrying the game. They may be bought ready trained, in most parts of Scinde, for a shilling or two.

" 5. The Laghar, or hobby, and her mate the Jaghar. This is the only long-winged hawk generally used in the country; she is large and black-eyed, with yellow legs, black claws, and a tail of a cinereous white colour. She is a native of Scinde, moults during the hot months from April to October, and builds in ruined walls and old mimosa trees. The Laghar is flown at quail, partridge, curlew, bastard bustard, and hares; the best sport is undoubtedly afforded by crows, only she is addicted to carrying the quarry, and is very likely to be killed by her angry enemies."—P. 13.

And now for a story of the "Ukab,"—a story which, be it observed, our author only gives on hearsay. We should, above all things, like to have heard that Mr. Burton had been an eye-witness of the scene, for we candidly confess to the entertaining of grave doubts upon the subject: we think that Mr. Burton has either been too credulous in

far, and her swoop as perpendicular as possible. To 'wait on' the falconer is to follow him (in the air) wherever he pleases.

\* "The passage hawks, or birds of the year, are those caught (full grown) in nets and traps at the period of migration: opposed to the 'eyesses,' or those taken from the nest.

† "To 'mew' a falcon is to keep her in a state of captivity whilst she moults. Thus she becomes an 'intermewed' bird, opposed to a 'haggard,' a wild hawk after the first year."

taking literally the amusing narrative of the ameer ; or that the word "vulture" with him and with ourselves are not synonymous terms.

"'Well, Sahib,' continued the ameer, speaking by jerks, as his breathlessness allowed him, 'one day I flew my beautiful Bahri after a little heron, which we all expected to see killed in a moment. They took the air well together, when, of a sudden, "See the Ukab, Oh, the Ukab!" cried the bazdar. True enough! High above us was the wretch, a black dot in the blue sky, looking out like an Affghan, for what he could plunder. We shouted — we waved the lure: unfortunately my poor bahri was so eager after her quarry, that nothing could tempt her out of the way of destruction. Then the ukab disappeared from our eyes, and we thought that the maloon\* had been frightened by our noise. The falcon and the little heron kept rising and rising, till we lost sight of them also. Presently, by the Prophet's beard I swear to you, Sahib, as we stood looking upwards with straining eyes, a speck appeared like a fly in the air, larger and larger it grew, the instant after, plump fell a body at our feet. It was poor Sohni, my falcon. The accursed vulture had shattered her skull with his foul beak. And since that day I have liberally dispensed kisas† to all his breed."—P. 37.

One more quotation, and we have done.

"It was a heart-gladdening spectacle for a sportsman. The pure blue sheet of water, lined with a fringe of vivid green, was literally covered with feathered life. The king-curlew with his ruby crown, and the common curlew, so celebrated, despite his homely garb, for the soaring and racing chase he affords, were pacing the bank in busy troops. Gulls and graceful terns hovered over the marsh, here alone in the air, there mingled with flights of red and white Brahminee ducks, wheeling about in search of a spot to alight on. The tall saras stood in pairs, now plunging their bills into the shallow water, now scattering pearly drops from their pink throats: the bittern's ruff peeped out of the green weeds, and the snowy white cloak of the paddy-bird glistened dazzlingly amongst the russet-coloured uniforms of duck and diver, snipe and snippet, plover and wild goose. Lank herons were there, and stout matronly pelicans gazing stolidly before them, with bustards large as turkeys, and a goodly array of plump little teal; the painted snipe, with beautiful dark colours ornamenting his wings; the

\* "The cursed.

† "The *lex talionis*, described by Mohammed the Prophet as the very vitality of his amiable faith."

mallard with his gorgeous plume, and many varieties of quiet-looking cranes swam, and dived, and shook, and splashed, all screaming, each in his own tongue, their natural joy in a life to them at that moment full of charms."—P. 57.

Notwithstanding its eccentricities, its Indianisms, and its occasional entanglements, we heartily commend this little book to the notice of our readers, not doubting that they will, with a little industry, extract therefrom abundance of amusement and a good share of instruction also.

K.

*Instance of a Blackbird turning white from fright.*—Every one at all cognizant of the manners and customs of the English in olden time, knows that it was an ancient custom in this kingdom, at the time when the humane sports of bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and the like, were in vogue with our merry forefathers, for the enlightened populace of England to collect together in every village on Shrove Tuesday, for the purpose of throwing stones and other missiles at some unfortunate cock, doomed to destruction on that day, and that he who first knocked over the miserable bird claimed him as his lawful prize: this was the sport known as "cocking." But perhaps it may not be so generally known that the remains of this ancient and barbarous custom still exist in some of the villages of Somersetshire, though in quite a different form, under the name of "crocking." It is the habit at this day, in some parts of that county, if there be any especially disagreeable person in the village, for his or her neighbours to throw down, with most discordant and crashing noise, at the door of their victim, all the broken pots and pans and such-like crockery that they have collected during the preceding twelvemonth; this takes place on the night of Shrove Tuesday, and as the actors in the sport are usually pretty numerous, and their object is to make as much clatter and din as possible, we may imagine the disturbance and noise created at such a time to be of the most deafening description. In a certain parish of Somersetshire, of which a relative of mine was the curate, an old lady, for some cause or other which it matters not to relate, became very obnoxious to her neighbours, and they, following the ancient custom of the place, saluted her on a certain Shrove Tuesday evening with all the broken crockery they could collect; indeed they carried out the pastime of "crocking" to the full. Now it chanced that hard by this persecuted individual was a public-house, the owner whereof had a tame blackbird, whose sleek black coat and rich notes had charmed many a lazy loiterer, and the bird was well known to all the inhabitants of the parish: but though the blackbird had doubtless listened to many a deep argument in the tap-room, and had his own peculiar opinions about protection, I fear he had never been initiated into the mysteries of "crocking," and so his mind had never been prepared for the horrors he had to undergo. But time went on, the end of the Carnival set in, and the blackbird without doubt, as an orthodox bird, ate pancakes to the full, and went off to roost, when suddenly he awoke with a start, his ears were assailed with the most discordant and crashing sounds, such a diabolical noise as he had never before heard so flurried and confounded him, that for two whole days he seemed to be panic-stricken, hopping about his cage incessantly, refusing his food, and apparently overcome with fright, and unable to shake off the terror with which the noise of the



*Remarks on a Critique of the 'Falconry of the Indus.'*

By RICHARD F. BURTON, Esq., Indian Army.

E. I. U. Service Club,

14, St. James's Square.

SIR,

I have the honour to forward the few following remarks upon a critique which lately appeared in your valuable pages, (Zool. 3569); trusting to your kindness and impartiality for their insertion.

You "entertain grave doubts" concerning the story of the Ukab or vulture attacking the hawk. I have none. Although personally I never witnessed one of these encounters, still, the hundred stories which I have heard from falconers in every part of Scinde, force me to believe that they sometimes take place. I might as well doubt that pigs kill children. One could scarcely expect to witness the scene, on account of the surprising care with which the falconer guards his charge. But I have frequently seen "preludes to dispute" between the Ukab and hawk, over a quarry, and Sir Alexander Burnes, if memory serves me aright, remarks the enmity with which they regard each other.

Moreover, I hold the Ukab to be a true vulture. It has the eyes even with the head, a bare neck, a habit of walking with half-extended wings, and the real vulturine fondness for carrion. Whether it does or does not constitute a distinct genus, I am unable, at present, to decide. But about this, as well as the other birds, I will adopt your suggestion, merely premising that the labour will most likely be in vain. The "unwise custom" of giving to unknown birds names "familiar as household words" to English ears, is rather to be charged upon the Anglo-Indian race, than upon an humble individual of that species. We all translate Bulbul by *nightingale*, call a kind of crow a *Malabar pheasant*, and "prate" of the Cheel as a *kite*.

Which leads me to another consideration. At page 3569 of your excellent journal, I read:—

"When a man is so delighted with having made out that *goolab*, in some of the thousand and one dialects in which India rejoices, is the equivalent of yellow in English, that he must needs prate of a hawk's having a *goolab eye*, we find his affectation all but insufferable, and devoutly wish that he were confined to the use of plain English for the remaining term of his natural life."

I exclaim, Alas! that the British critic will not waste over his critique as many minutes as the author criticized spends days in compo-

sition. Kindly glance your eye, Sir, once more over the passage, at page 16, and you will find that your lash has been laid upon a literal quotation from Sir A. Burnes's 'Personal Narrative of a Journey to Cabool.' My shoulders are broad enough to bear my own sins, but I beg leave to decline carrying additional weight.

Possibly you may, by way of being candid, contend that, wrong in one point, you are right upon the whole, for the *brochure* does abound in native and technical words. True!—and the *rationale* of the matter is this. I write for the student, and the student rightly prefers books which, like Herklot's 'Qanoon-i-Islam,' and Lane's 'Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians,' give the Oriental name for every object of which they treat. I flatter myself that even a tyro, after perusing my little work, could mix with English or Scindian falconers without displaying offensive ignorance of the noble sport. Moreover, for many years I have been employed in studying the Scindian literature and language, which, from your allusion to the learned Burritt, I suppose you rank with the Ojibbeway or Digger dialects. Allow me then to refer you to a work lately published by the Court of Directors of the Hon. East India Company, and entitled, 'Sindh, or the Races that inhabit the Valley of the Indus.' You will there find that it is the language of a country as large as England; that it is the fourth (not the thousand and first) spoken in Western India; and that it is attracting the attention of many linguists.

To conclude, Sir, pray do not determine that I have any evil intention of assaulting you with my tooruratee—a foot-note would have informed you that it is a misprint in Burnes for toormatee—but kindly remember, in your future critiques upon "Indianee" works, a sentiment which you will find expressed in p. 91 of my Postscript.

And believe me,

Your obedient Servant,

RICHARD F. BURTON,

Indian Army.

To the Editor of the 'Zoologist.'

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[We wish our correspondent, in addition to his able and playful repartee, had favoured the readers of the 'Zoologist' with the required information as to the real names of the birds used in Indian falconry. The subjoined note from Mr. Gurney will, however, supply this key to Mr. Burton's most amusing volume. One word more: let our subscribers read the book, our critique, and the author's reply, and we will abide by their verdict.—*Ed. Zool.*]

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*Note on Indian Falconry.*—With reference to the notice of Lieut. Burton's work on the 'Falconry of the Valley of the Indus,' in your last number (Zool. 3569), I find the following falcons and hawks enumerated as being trained in India for this purpose, in Mr. Jerdon's excellent work entitled 'Illustrations of Indian Ornithology,' published at Madras in 1847; which information may probably elucidate some of the points in question. The species thus mentioned by Mr. Jerdon are:—

Falco Peregrinus,	....	called in India,	Bhyree.
„ Peregrinator,	....	....	Shaheen.
„ Juggur,	....	....	Juggur (male), Luggur (female).
Hypotriorchis Chicquera,	....	....	Turoomtee.
Astur Palumbarius,	....	....	Baz.
„ trivirgatus vel Indicus,	....	....	Gorbesra.
Accipiter Besra,	....	....	Besra.
„ Fringillarius, vel			
Badius,	....	....	Basha.
„ Dussumierii (?),	....	....	Shikra.
„ virgatus (?),	....	....	Khandesra.

I may add that Mr. Jerdon has the following paragraph in his account of *Aquila Bonellii*:—“Most native falconers have stories to relate of its having carried off a favourite hawk;”—a statement bearing strong resemblance to that made to Lieut. Burton respecting the vulture referred to in his work.—*J. H. Gurney; Easton, September 24, 1852.*

*Note on the Habits of the Fern Owl or Goat-sucker, (Caprimulgus Europæus).* By Mr. W. H. THOMAS, late Bird-keeper at the Surrey Zoological Gardens, and Zoological Society of London.

ONE sultry day, about the beginning of July, 1832, I was roaming through Dulwich Wood, which, at that time, was thickly clothed with underwood, with here and there dense clumps of tall furze, and sloe and hawthorn bushes. I had lost all trace of a pathway, and had been wading through the close shrubs for some time, when I suddenly came to an open part of the wood, of small space, and almost directly from under my feet up flew a bird in my face. So sudden and noiseless was its flight that I was at first startled; it flew close round me in a light swallow-like manner, displaying ridiculous gestures, opening