

est ma confiance en votre loyauté bien connue, et quels sont pour vous mes sentimens de haute estime et de considération.

“ O. DES MURS.”

With regard to the first point, we give M. Des Murs' remarks, in accordance with his request ; but it will be observed, that the whole ground of his complaint rests on an erroneous interpretation of what we have said. M. Des Murs has mistranslated the passage complained of, and given it a meaning exactly contrary to that which it conveys in the original. Far from implying that he “advanced” the theory that the *Baleniceps* lays “spotted” eggs, we stated that M. Des Murs “candidly allows” (*avoue franchement*) that on this point M. Verreaux's correspondent was in error. We, therefore, thought M. Des Murs “unwise” in accepting M. Verreaux's correspondent's statements on other points relating to the habits of this bird. M. Des Murs' description of the egg of the *Baleniceps* is sufficiently accurate, and we have no fault to find with it. As concerns the second point, we admit that the subject of zoological classification is one on which considerable latitude of opinion is allowable. But when any new and startling theory is propounded, it is hard upon the critic not to be allowed the use even of a note or two of admiration !

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Mr. S. Stevens has kindly communicated to us the following extracts from letters recently received from Mr. A. R. Wallace :—

“Awaiya, Ceram, Nov. 26, 1859.

“I have nothing particular to say now, except that Ceram is a *wretched place* for birds. I have been here a month, and have got *literally* not a single pretty or good bird of any kind, except the small Lory I sent before from Amboyna ; and, what is more, neither European residents nor natives know of a single handsome bird in the country, except one or two Lories and Pigeons, which I have not yet got or seen. When Mr. Gould and others talked about the *very fine* birds of Ceram, you should have asked them to specify them, that I might know what to inquire or look for. My only hope is now in the eastern part of the island ; but I cannot expect there anything but one or two fine Lories. In

*Coleoptera* and Butterflies I shall do better, though almost all are the same as at Amboyna. I am at present confined to the house from the bites of an *Acarus*, which produces inflamed sores on the legs, though it is invisibly small. My three best men have all left me—one sick, another gone home to his sick mother, and the third and best is married in Ternate, and his wife *would not let him go*: he, however, remains working for me, and is going again to the eastern part of Gilolo.”

“Passo, Island of Amboyna, Dec. 31, 1859.

“My letter was returned to me because I had not prepaid the postage as far as Singapore. I now add a few lines. I have just arrived here, being quite tired of the barrenness of Ceram. I shall stay about three weeks, and then go to East Ceram and Kè, if possible.”

“Passo, Feb. 14, 1860.

“I send you this *via* Marseilles, in order that you may get for me, as soon as possible, three cheap small double-barrelled guns, and send them overland to Ternate, to be ready for my next year’s campaign to *New Guinea*. They are absolutely necessary for me, as I have now with me Charles Allen, who went out with me, and we must have a double quantity of tools to work with. He is now starting from N. Ceram and Mysole, while I go to E. Ceram and Kè. I expect to get some grand collections yet to send you. I am now packing up my Ceram and Amboyna collections to send you. In birds they are miserably poor—only *one* being, I think, *new*, and very interesting from being a second species of the Celebes’ genus *Basilornis*. The few specimens of *Tanysiptera* were only obtained by two men going out for a month after nothing else; and the beautiful *Lorius domicella* was equally scarce, though domesticated specimens are abundant. There is scarcely anything else of interest but the unique *Platycercus amboinensis* (not found in Amboyna, however), which will show that my Dorey Bird was a distinct species.”

Mr. Blyth writes from Calcutta, April 31st, as follows:—

“The Cassowary which I described to you (see ‘*Ibis*,’ 1860, p. 193) is now more than half-grown, and in company with two