

Penthetria? ♂

Shot by Mr W C Lucas in the
Waterbury district in Jan'y
1890 Mr Lucas says that he
noticed this bird & one or two
others flying in circles over
some high grass in a ~~swamp~~
swampy place alighting
every now & again on the
tops of the grass - the birds
evidently breeding - though
the hen birds were not
noticeable - the birds
were scarce in the district
& very local - the grass
about which the birds were
was some 10 ft high or more

Thos Ayres

and also Mr Jermy's paper
on the "Nightjar" from the "Transactions
of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists
Society" - this is very good of him
I often see some of your hard
work in the "Ibis"

Yours very truly

Thomas Ayrton

R Bowdler Sharpe Esq

British Museum

Cromwell St

London

Polebrook

Sept 30th 1890

Dear Mr Sharpe

The receipt of your letter
of the 15th May gave me a good
deal of pleasure (though I do not
mean the portion alluding to
our poor old friend Mr Jermy's
death) and I cannot better
respond to it than by sending
you the last new Transvaal bird
that has fallen under my notice -
I post it, you to day on to Kimberley
from there it must be re-posted,
as there is no direct parcels post
from here to England - Lucas
got the bird from the warmer
districts and enclose notes of all
he can tell me about it, if there
is any Rudors or project attached
to the bird it goes to Lucas, to
whom I think you had better
write direct about it - if it is worth
while - I intended of course
to send it to our poor old friend
Jermy, but as he has joined the
Majority, and I had already written
to him about it, I asked the present
Mr Jermy whether I should send
it on to him - he, in a letter
to me says that he is not up
in La birds and that I had

better send it on to you, this I
should have done whether Mr. Perry,
had suggested it or not and I had
already in fact spoken to Lucas to
that effect - whether the bird is
new or not or only a straggler
over this way, you must decide
it appears to me to be a *Penthetria*
though I must leave its identity
to your superior knowledge -
little time have I at present to
give to Natural History and
what birds I get for the present
are already bespoken by a Yorkshire
lover of the beauties - but if some
day I can get a lot together I will
write & let you know

By the bye Lucas' address is

William Gloucester Lucas

Malvern

Transvaal

I have delayed writing to you
in the hopes I should again see
your younger brother - I know
him pretty well & like him, but
as to Natural History at present
I think you may say good bye
to the idea - he has got a nice little
wife & three piece annuities and
butterfly hunting here doesn't pay
the old woman her ninepence" or

"buy the child a new rock" (the
anxious) & he & I are scum in the
same boat in that way, he is
away just now looking after some
property or another, but the first
time I see him here again, he
shall read your letter, it is a fine
manly young fellow and was doing
to census last time I saw him

If I can ever get a lot of butterflies
together I will let you know
there are a goodish lot of *Acraea*
about here. if I could only
manage to get after them, amongst
them is that rare *Acraea Amazona*
I have never yet caught it -
Lucas got one one day, & sold it
for £1 & never got the money oh!
some brain split, you would say,
for asking such a high price
for it -

A thousand thanks for the
trouble you have taken in
acquainting me about Mr. Perry's
death - the present Mr. H. Perry
wrote to me about it very
kindly & sent me the Norfolk
paper about it - & yesterday I
received from the same source
the "Memoir of the late Mrs. Perry"
printed in the "Zoologist" for June

but I have been acting for some
little time besides and don't
tell me its late as I am 36 -

Parliament financially is ruined
the Boers do not pay their taxes
excepting such indirect ones as are
collected through the merchants
and as to money, there is none -
and none nearer secure than the
Boers themselves - this serves them
very well right - for kicking out the
British from here - though we all
suffer with them - I am sorry to see
that Mr Gladstone is in power again
which means a further decline to
England according to my poor ideas
of matters - I trust you are
heartily & well as I am

Yours very truly

Thos. Gifford

Don't work so hard - food men
are scarce

Polkington

March 2nd 1886

Dear Mr Sharpe

Long ago I intended to
write again to you to thank you
for your very pretty kind letter of
of the 27th Dec. and for opening
me the time to write it, for I
see that you work harder than
my horse and my idea is that
if you don't get an outcry rather
frequently, you won't be able to
stand the wear & tear of it and
I am sorry to see that you have seen
too much money for it is always
for the wife & little ones sake principle
that one wants a fair share of
it, etc. - as to my self I am often
without a shilling for a month
at a time, that prevents me from
moving about as I should like
to collect and discover and a
hundred other ways prevents
one from getting along. You father

Bowdler Square Collection

me very much by asking me for
a photograph of my self, some time
back a very good man came our
way so I got my droopie looking
thing copied & have much pleasure
in sending you one of the results
I have already sent me or two
of my pictures are some little
time ago and now I hope you
will return the compliment by
sending me a likeness of yourself
for I am very anxious to see
you I think it should be
compulsory (under pain of death)
that all members of the B.O.U.
should send in their photos or become
members and the editor should be
equally compelled (or any other proper
authority) to have copies put in every
issue - so that all unhappy fellows
living in such horrible places
as Trompsburg & elsewhere may
see the good natured faces that are
so much wanted in birds

I would suggest too that all the old
members up to date should immediately
send their likenesses, though by the bye
when I come to think of it - for
every subscriber to get a set of
likenesses would cost somebody a
lot of money, though I really think
the value of the book would be much
added to - Of course I see from time
to time the notices of your new
works & I see too that Lord Lilford
is busy with the British birds
I am afraid I shall be able to help
you but little in the way of birds, but
whenever I can I will send some on
I congratulate you very much on
your late Indian trip - What a
lot of work you will have with that
large collection - The more I read
your edition of Lay and the more
useful it becomes to me and I am
very sorry you got nothing for the labor
With regard to the photograph I am
not always quite as thin as that

Macanae Lydenburg
TanzaniaDec 24th 1874

My dear Mr Sharpe

I have received your
very kind letter of the 16th July
and I am much obliged for
your order for larks &c believe
me it is not that I ever had the
slightest doubt about payment
that I have not long ago sent
you more sparrows as you wished
me to do, but it is simply because
my old friend Mr Gurney (who was
the first person I supplied in England)
has always wished for more birds
than I have at any time collected &
still continues to do so and it is for
this reason alone that I doubt if I
can now send you anything worth
having - but I will write to Mr
Gurney about it -

Your friend Mr Thompson
has returned to England - but
when he visits Pickersbrook

I hope to have the pleasure of
making his acquaintance.

This is a very bad locality
for larks & warblers and indeed
for most birds. I have made
but a very poor collection since
my sojourn in this land
of rain - please address
me, at Dorchester as
usual - wishing you all
the compliments of the season

I am

Very dear Sir

Yours very truly

Thomas Agnes

I have been burnt out here
and amongst other good books
lost my "Ibis" for 1873

Ayres

Gold Fields Lydenburg
Transvaal
Oct 26th 1873

S. R. B. Sharpe Esq^r

Dear Mr Sharpe.

I am afraid I have disappointed you - You will remember I wrote in March 1872 stating that I had sent you a few birds through Mr Gurney, and promising a better lot next time. I have however utterly failed in collecting any for you, my time having been too much taken up with business matters - What few birds I have been able to get have been sent to my kind friend Mr Gurney - Not having received any letter from you acknowledging the birds sent and as nothing is credited to me in my acct with the Norwich Bank as coming from you, I suspect you have forgotten all about it - did you get my letter & acct? the amount was £6.14.0 - kindly settle this little affair for me - In time I may yet be able to do more in the collecting way and if I should

manage to get a good large lot
together I will write & let you know
if you still wish it -

I understand you are now
Curator of the Ornithological Department
of the British Museum. allow me
to congratulate you on this change of
position - as I suppose it is a matter
of congratulation - I read with pleasure
your contributions now & again to
the "Ibis"

Yrs very truly
Thomas Agnes

as described by them in both the above named species - but the females of *C. capensis* are similar to the males in plumage these latter birds breed plentifully in *Ophephorus* laying their eggs in the swallow nests the young birds are somewhat similar in markings to the adult females of *amaragdinus* & *Klaasi* - One day in Natal I shot a female of *Klaasi* in the usually described plumage from which, on picking it up an egg dropped the shell to the best of my recollection was white, with small reddish spots about it, thicker at the obtuse end forming a zone of spots or blotched marks - also I have shot & examined a good number of *amaragdinus* and never found one in the full green plumage, to be a female - *C. capensis* is I think the only species in which the males & females are similar in plumage - In all probability the young birds of *amaragdinus* & *Klaasi* are very similar in plumage to the adult females and collectors may have been careless in noting the sex - perhaps having got a young bird have sometimes marked it female without examination this might cause confusion

Yrs very truly
Thomas. A. C. Aries

L. R. B. Sharpe Esq
British Museum

Albany

Sydenburg

Transvaal

June 25th 1874

My dear Mr Sharpe

I have lately received your kind present - 60 eggs on the Orioles, Swallow Rollers & bucklows for which accept my best thanks; and also your letter of the 16th of March acquainting me that you had kindly paid £6 to my credit with Currier & Co - I felt sure you had forgotten it, the delay was of no consequence, I am very sorry to hear that you have lost one of your children -

You have been kind enough to give me an order for £10 worth of hawks & and I should be very glad to undertake the matter were it not that I had long ago promised my kind old friend Mr Currier all I can manage to get in that way and in fact all other birds too and I do not send him anything like the numbers he wishes to have, as I have so much work to do that I cannot find time for my favorite amusements shooting & collecting and for this reason I am afraid I cannot be of use to you in the stupendous work you have taken in hand viz "a complete catalogue of the birds of the world"

as what little I know about the birds of
this part of the world you will easily get from
Mr Gurney. I am sure and I always send
specimens into the descriptions - I must
say I admire your great courage in
undertaking the great task you have & I
wish you every success - I appreciate fully
your complete method of description - with
keys to genus & species - capital and I shall
be awfully glad to get the new edition of
Lazard's birds of La in fact on seeing the
notice in the Ibis for 1872 that such a
work was in progress I wrote to Mr Gurney
to ask him kindly to get a copy for me as
soon as it was published - I have just received
the Ibis for 1873 it is quite a treat to me
me to get such a book in this out of the way
part of the world - I have read your notices
of the genus *Platystira* and what a pretty
plate of those jolly little fellows - *P. blissetti*
and *P. platensis* - I have only yet seen one of
the genus here - I think *Platis involuta* but
it is very likely there are others in the
wooded ravines of these grand mountains,
tigers or rather panthers are plentiful, we
shot one about a month ago and others
pay us almost nightly visits - Knowing
these fellows are about makes collecting
highly interesting - I am having a
turn at digging at the sand & a
goldfield with my brother, and we
cant make it pay so shall return
before long to Pichefstrom - but I V

before we leave will have a week or so
at collecting - last weeks find was 4 of
the week before 9 of and there have been
exceptionally good weeks - we have very
much cold wet weather amongst these
mountains and we much dislike the
climate and so do insects & birds for
I have not seen a worse collecting field in
La - this is rather astonishing as there is
much wood & water about - clear streams
in every direction from the limestone
precipices.

Of the Essays you so kindly sent
me on the Oriolidae, Hirundinidae,
Coraciidae & Ceryleidae I had already
perused those on the Rollers & Orioles
in the Ibis for 1874 & 1870 but those on
the Swallows & Cuckoos of the Ethiopian
region I had not seen - I see you make
a remark about the habits of cuckoos
being often spoilt in collecting & occasionally
I see in the Ibis complaints of much
the same kind, some time back some
one complained of the *okuk* being spoilt,
I rather think it is because as a rule
get but a small price for their labors
and cannot afford more time in the
preparation of skins for for I know from
experience that to pay unusual attention
to these little particulars doubles the time
in the skinning process - At pages 590 &
594 in reference to the females of
C. sumatrana & *C. klasi* you express
doubts as to the correctness of information,
but you will ultimately find that the
collectors are right - the adult females are