PARADOXORNIS AUSTENI, n. sp.

O.V.O.A. O.V

Austen's Paradoxornis.

As long ago as 1836 I published the first species of the remarkable genus *Paradoxornis*; and ever since that time it has been a disputed point amongst ornithologists as to where this genus should be placed in the natural system; it has found various positions, being by some referred to the Timaliidæ, and by others to the Fringillidæ. Since the genus was first instituted by me, several allied forms, such as *Suthora*, *Cholornis*, &c., have been discovered; and *Paradoxornis* itself now numbers several representatives. The smaller forms like *Suthora* appear to lead off towards the Paridæ, and *Paradoxornis* to *Conostoma* and the Timaliidæ; whilst *P. Heudei*, belonging apparently to another subgenus which may be called *Calamornis*, is so closely allied to *Calamophilus*, that I have no doubt in my own mind that they form together a natural group.

But we must now speak of the present species, one of the novelties which has rewarded the energy of Major Godwin-Austen, who has done so much to enlighten our ignorance of the little-known birds of the hill-country on the north-eastern frontiers of our Indian Empire; and I have accordingly named it after him.

There can be no doubt that *P. Austeni* is very closely allied to *P. flavirostris*; but it has no black throat, this part being white, with a few black spots on the fore neck; and as these characters appear to be constant, I have no hesitation in describing it as a new species.

Major Godwin-Austen sends me the following note on the present bird:—"Of the lighter-coloured species, which you propose to honour me by naming after me, I obtained five specimens, all precisely alike—two in the Naga Hills near Kuchai, the others at Shillong in the Khasi Hills, in both localities at an elevation of from 5000 to 6000 feet above the level of the sea. These hills are well wooded in parts, with open grass-lands. A specimen from the Naga Hills measured in the flesh—length 7·8 inches, wing 3·3, tail 4·1, tarsus 1·05, bill, from front 0·67, from gape 0·4. Legs plumbeous, with a slight tinge of green; bill yellow. The dark-coloured bird (*Paradoxornis flavirostris*), of which I left one specimen with you, I obtained in the great beels (marshes) near Bolagunj, on the south side of the Khasi Hills, where it was the only form seen in December and April; it evidently breeds there. This very low marshy tract is covered with high grasses (from 12 to 18 feet high), dense thickets of a rose, and bulrushes, but no trees."

Above very pale brown, the tail almost uniform with the back, and showing some slight barring when held away from the light; wings rather darker than the back, the inner webs of the quills deep sepia-brown; entire head and hind neck pale sandy rufous; lores, feathers all round and below the eye, as well as on the fore part of the cheeks, buffy white; ear-coverts black; sides of neck very pale sandy buff; under surface of body buffy white, more fulvous on the sides and flanks, the chin slightly blackish, and the fore neck marked with a few triangular spots of black; under wing-coverts clear fulvous, like the inner lining of the wing.

The figures in the Plate are of the size of life.