

CURSORIUS GALLICUS, *Gmel.*

Cream-Coloured Courser.

- Cursorius Gallicus*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 692.
——— *Europæus*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 751.
——— *isabellinus*, Meyer, Taschenb. Deutschl. Vög., tom. ii. p. 328.
Tachydromus Gallicus, Ill. Prod. Syst. Mamm. et Av., p. 250.
Cursor isabellinus, Wagl. Syst. Av., *Cursor*, sp. 1.
——— *Europæus*, Naum. Vög. Deutschl., 1834, tom. vii. p. 77, tab. 171.
Cursorius Jamesoni, Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. part ii. p. 875.

THE first notice of the occurrence of this bird in England is contained in the late Dr. Latham's 'General History of Birds,' where it is stated that it was killed by William Hammond, Esq., of St. Alban's Court, on his estate at Wingham, in East Kent, in the year 1785. The present owner of this estate, W. O. Hammond, Esq., having kindly sent me a copy of Dr. Latham's letter to his grandfather on the subject, I think it will be well to insert it here, as any details respecting so rare a bird cannot fail to be perused with interest.

"SIR,—This morning I received from you what I consider a valuable acquisition, though I have with you to regret the condition the bird arrived in. I cannot say that it is a nondescript, though I believe it is the first time the bird has been known to inhabit this kingdom. M. Buffon has described it in his 'Histoire des Oiseaux,' vol. viii. p. 128, under the name of Courvite; and it is also to be found figured in the 'Planches Enluminées' of D'Aubenton, No. 795. I have likewise described it my 'Synopsis of Birds,' vol. iii. part 1. p. 217, by the name of the Cream-coloured Plover. It has been met with in France, and one greatly similar (if not a variety) on the coast of Coromandel. Your note does not say in what place in England it was shot, which still remains a desideratum with me; and if you will not think it too much trouble some future day to inform me of the place where and day when it was killed, whether there were others in company, or if any such have been seen at other times of the year, and if the ground it was on was marshy or otherwise, or anything else relative to its manners, note, &c., I should esteem it a particular favour. Notwithstanding the bad condition it is in, I cannot refrain the attempt of putting it into attitude, and shall be very happy to show you what I may be able to do with it, if you will do me the favour of a call when you next come our way.

"I am, Sir, your most sincerely obliged,

"Dartford, 12th December 1785."

"JOHN LATHAM."

To this Mr. Hammond has appended the following extract from the 'Monthly Review,' page 143:—

"The *Isabellinus*, or Cream-Coloured Courser, has been thrice captured in the southern and temperate parts of Europe. One of the three specimens was shot in Kent, at St. Alban's Court, the seat of William Hammond, Esq., who presented it to Dr. Latham with the following account:—

"It was first met with running upon some light land; and so little fearful was it, that after having sent for a gun, one was brought which did not readily go off; the report made the bird rise, but, after making a turn or two, it settled again within a hundred yards, when a second shot despatched it. It was observed to run with irresistible swiftness, and at intervals to pick up something from the ground, and was so bold as to render it difficult to make it rise, in order to take a more secure aim on the wing. The note was not like any kind of Plover, nor, indeed, to be compared to that of any known bird."

"This specimen found its way into the Leverian Museum; at the time of the sale of which it was purchased from Fichtel, who had bought it, by that zealous naturalist Donovan, for the sum of eighty-three guineas. It is now deposited in the British Museum."

Since the period above mentioned England has been visited at distant intervals by other examples of this wanderer. We learn from the Supplement to Montagu's 'Ornithological Dictionary' that one was shot in North Wales in 1793 by Mr. George Kingston of Queen's College, Oxford; and Atkinson, the author of the 'Compendium of Ornithology,' was in possession of another, which had been killed at Wetherby in Yorkshire in April 1816. A fourth example was shot by one of Lord Harewood's keepers in the same county in 1825. A fifth was recorded, in the third volume of the 'Zoological Journal,' by G. T. Fox, Esq., as having been shot on the 15th of October, 1827, in Charnwood Forest, in Leicestershire, and is now in the possession of the Rev. T. Gisborne, of Yoxhall Lodge, Staffordshire. A sixth is recorded by Yarrell as having occurred in Durham in October 1827. On the 2nd of October 1855 a fine Cream-Coloured Courser fell to the gun of Walter Langton, Esq., of West Hill, Wandsworth, while partridge-shooting on East Down, Salisbury Plain, where the bird suddenly pitched before him, and was easily shot: this specimen I have seen at Mr. Langton's house, and a very fine one it is. In the 'Times' for October 28, 1858, the following