## SCOPS ZORCA.

Scops Eared Owl.

Strix scops, Linn. Syst. Nat., xii. edit. tom. i. p. 132.

— zorca, Cetti, Ucc. di Sardegn., p. 60.

— carniolica, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 290.

— gui, Scop. Ann. Hist. Nat., tom. i. no. 9.

Asio scops, Briss. Orn., tom. i. p. 495, pl. xxxvii. fig. 1.

Scops zorca, Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 217.

— Aldrovandi, Willugh. Orn., p. 65, tab. xii.

— ephialtes, Savig. Descr. de l'Egypte, Hist. Nat. tom. i. p. 107.

— europæus, Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 106.

— asio, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xiii. part. 2. p. 51.

Bubo scops, Boie, Isis, 1822, p. 549.

— scops, Schleg. Rev. Crit. des Ois. d'Eur., p. xiv et 38.

Ephialtes scops, Keys. und Blas. Wirbelth. Eur., p. 33.

We find in the great family of Strigidæ as much diversity of form and colouring as in any other group of birds of similar magnitude and equally general distribution; and it is especially interesting to study their structural variations and marked differences. Although generally nocturnal, many are diurnal, the visionary powers of some of the genera enabling them to see as well by day as by night: some, as we all know, have bright yellow or orange irides, while in others they are as black as sloes. Some genera, such as Bubo and Scops, are adorned with graceful tufts of feathers springing from above the eye, while the Surniæ have full and rounded heads, without a trace of such appendages. The members of the genus Strix, of which our Barn-Owl may be cited as a typical example, are distinguished by the extreme delicacy, softness, and lovely pencillings of their plumage. Some genera have bare tarsi, as Ketupa; while others have enormous feathered tarsi and toes-for example, Scotopelia. Now each of these diversities of structure is adapted to some special purpose; thus the huge bird just alluded to and the great Australian Hieracoglaux strenuus prey upon large quadrupeds and birds, while the greater part of the food of the more delicate Scops consists mainly of insects. The forms above mentioned, however, are only a part of the great family of Owls, whose distribution over our globe is so general that no portion of its surface is entirely destitute of them. The area over which the present species ranges was formerly considered to be much more extensive than it really is: thus, instead of being spread over the whole of Africa, its range on that continent is somewhat circumscribed; for it would seem that it does not cross the equator, and that the birds from Senegal and the Cape of Good Hope, which were formerly regarded as identical with it, are really distinct. The same remark applies to India; for it is now excluded from the fauna of that country, and the name Scops pennatus no longer placed as a synonym of Scops zorca. In North Africa, Egypt, Persia, the Holy Land, Asia Minor, and the whole of Southern Europe, including the islands in the Mediterranean, it is tolerably common; it is equally numerous in France and some parts of Germany; while in Belgium and Holland it is rare, and becomes still more so in Sweden and Norway, which constitute the boundary of its range in a northern direction. In England, Scotland, and Ireland its occurrence is purely accidental; and if any instances of its having bred therein have been recorded, they are few in number, and have not been satisfactorily verified. If we consult some of the works relative to European ornithology published on the Continent, we shall find many details respecting the habits and economy of this bird with which, for want of opportunity, our native writers have not been able to make themselves acquainted, and have therefore had to be content with giving little more than a list of its various occurrences in our island, which are too numerous to be recapitulated here; I must not, however, omit to mention two or three that have been kindly forwarded to me for the purposes of the present work. Mr. E. H. Rodd's specimen from the Scilly Islands was especially beautiful, its pencilled markings rivalling in minuteness those of the most delicately marked Nightjar or of the Wryneck; and another, equally beautiful, was presented to me by the late amiable Earl of Craven, which had been caught alive under a turnip-leaf in a field on his Lordship's estate at Ashdown, in Berkshire, I believe, the year 1858. Lastly, at the moment I am writing, June 1868, Mr. Roche, of Clungunford House, Shropshire, sends me word that a fine male specimen has been recently killed by John Hurleston Leche, Esq., of Carden Park, Cheshire. It had been heard, several evenings before it was obtained, uttering its peculiar note of "kew, kew."

"In the Djendeli district we found this Owl abundant; every night its peculiar cry might be heard from one or more individuals. Several, which had been caught on their nests, were brought to us by the Arabs;

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