



## JAN PIETER VAN WICKEVOORT CROMMELIN.

On October 20<sup>th</sup> last died at Haarlem the Dutch Ornithologist Dr. juris Jan Pieter van Wickevoort Crommelin at the age of nearly 61 years.

His love for the birds of his country dated from his early boyhood, but the interest in regular ornithological studies was awakened in him by the well-known Zoologist Temminck, an old friend of his father, during the years he passed as a *studiosus juris* at the Leyden University. Encouraged by Temminck, who introduced him to the Leyden Museum, Crommelin decided, after having taken his degree of Doctor of Laws in 1852, to devote a whole year exclusively to the study of zoology under the able direction of Professor van der Hoeven.

Being independent as regards pecuniary matters, he felt no inclination to enter either the career of a lawyer or a politician, and could therefore the more easily devote his time to collecting and studying the birds of his country. His collection increased very rapidly, and with an extraordinary zeal and perseverance he has, during nearly forty years, brought it to such a standard that it may unhesitatingly be said to contain almost all the species of birds hitherto observed in the Netherlands. Most of the species are represented by large series of very carefully selected, and splendidly stuffed and preserved specimens. In this collection of about 2000 specimens a large number of very rare species are represented. Amongst these the attention of

Ornithologists may be called to the following:

*Milvus migrans* (Bodd.).

*Turdus obscurus* Gm. juv.; Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> 1843, near Haarlem.

*Anthus richardi* Vieill. ♂ juv.; Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> 1890, The Hague.

*Loxia bifasciata* (Brehm), two males; North Holland.

*Ardea ralloides* Scop. adult; July 1830, Schollewaers Eiland.

*Ibis falcinellus* (L.), ♀ jun.; Oct. 30<sup>th</sup> 1873, Overijsel.

*Otis tarda* L. male; March 7<sup>th</sup> 1855, Dordrecht.

*Otis tetrax* L. two females, shot on December 28<sup>th</sup> 1853 in Gelderland, and January 28<sup>th</sup> near Alkmaar.

*Rallus parvus* Scop. ♂ juv.; September 9<sup>th</sup> 1872, Overijsel.

*Numenius tenuirostris* (Vieill.), male; December 5<sup>th</sup> 1856, near Haarlem.

*Fuligula rufina* (Pall.), five specimens from the Naarder Meer near Amsterdam.

Moreover, as hardly need to be said, his collection contains whole series of *Ampelis garrula*, *Nucifraga caryocatactes*, *Syrrhaptes paradoxus* and others, all obtained during their respective invasions in the Netherlands.

A complete list contains ample informations about each of the specimens obtained. His collection has furnished a great number of facts mentioned in »Bouwstoffen voor eene Fauna van Nederland», and many valuable contributions from his hand are contained in the »Archives Néerlandaises» and in »Nederlandsch Tijdschrift voor de Dierkunde», while many of his most interesting observations have been recorded by Dr. Herman Albarda in his annual reports (Ornithologisch Jaarverslag) which are published in »Tijdschrift der Dierkundige Vereeniging».

Crommelin was much interested in the occurrence of hybrids, especially among Ducks, and several very interesting cases of interbreeding were treated of by him in the above mentioned periodicals.

The value of all that has been done by this zealous Ornithologist will, however, be enhanced when we consider that, already during his academical studies, he suffered much from a disease of his eyes, which rapidly became worse,

until, at the end of a few years, it resulted in total blindness.

With the aid of an able and trustworthy servant, who, though ignorant of foreign languages, had to read to him the ornithological publications in the different languages, and to assist him in his work, he was able to help himself even in the most intricate ornithological questions, and acquired in course of time a wonderful aptitude for recognizing his birds by feeling especially the bill and feet. It was very seldom that the slightest aberration escaped him, either in coloration or form.

Crommelin was not only a thorough student of the birds of his own country, but of general European Ornithology as well. He was, moreover, a man whose knowledge was built on a very broad base. Being very well acquainted with foreign languages, he showed a lively interest in Botany and other branches of Natural Science. His blindness he bore patiently, and his modesty and amiability in conversation with others were highly esteemed by all who were fortunate enough to belong among the number of his acquaintances.

That his modest work was duly appreciated by his Dutch fellow Zoologists, is clearly proved in a necrology from the pen of his friend Dr. Herman W. de Graaf, published lately in »Tijdschrift der Dierkundige Vereeniging», 1891, p. 81.

According to his wish, the whole collection of the able Ornithologist was, after his death, presented to the National Museum at Leyden, where it will find its place in a special gallery as the stock of a separate collection representing the Ornis of the Netherlands, and be a worthy monument to a worthy Dutch Naturalist.

Leyden Museum, January 1892.

J. BÜRTIKOFER.