

Vermont

Oct 76

Montreal

Monday 6th March 1876

Dear Sir -

With this I send you a few specimen plates of a Monograph on our Falconidae - I have now in preparation - These photographs are being taken by Notman with very great care, from well selected & well mounted birds - I think they far surpass in accuracy the majority of the colored plates with which Ornithological works have for some time been illustrated - I would draw your attention specially to the plate representing *F. Dawsonis* (new species Hall?) a copy of which I have also sent for inspection to Baird at Washington.

Hall's description is very inaccurate  
& gives altogether a wrong idea -

Will you kindly give me your candid  
opinion on the worth of these photographs  
as illustrative of a popular re-  
viewer of our Canadian species  
of Hawks - Your reply, I may find  
it convenient to embody in a Prospe-  
ctus now being prepared, should you  
kindly permit me to do so -

If these plates are examined thro  
a large diameter magnifying glass,  
or Stereoscope, the texture & markings  
of the plumage may be seen to very  
great advantage, & the more largely  
they are magnified the more char-  
acteristic details will be brought out -  
In a lithographed drawing this is

not the case, as a close inspection reveals nothing more than is apparent at first sight. The magnified photo for instance, shows beautifully the shape & position of the nostrils, cere & notch or festoon on beak; the scales or markings on the tarsi; the character of the toes & claws, & numerous other very important parts. While a little practice will enable the student even to detect the general colors of the plumage & to tell black from brown & brown from pale colors. True colors however, as well as the colors of the eyes, I contend, <sup>are</sup> ~~to~~ much better explained by a few lines of accurate text than by impudicous & inexperienced coloring.

The Monograph, if I may so call it, will contain 33 of  
these plates - each of which will be accompanied by a  
brief description of the species, giving distribution in  
N. America, summer resorts, breeding grounds, trends  
& eggs, founded upon personal observation & the records  
of a great number of other field students whose lists I  
have recently collected & studied -

Your kind expression of opinion respecting the value  
of the foregoing will be of great value & assistance to  
the success of this contribution to our Canadian Ornithology.

J. N. Silliman & L. D. F. H. S. & }  
McGill College.

Yours most respectfully  
Henry J. Vanvor