Bowdler Sharpe Collection

Howick
October 10th 91

Dear Sir

Thank you for your kind letter duly received. It contains one or two questions which I will endeavour to answer to the best of my ability — but first I must tell you that I have secured a promise of a collection of moths for your daughter. but I should like to know what class of that small game she especially desires. so that I may not send useless ones. The direction must be plain as it is altogether strange walking for me in the land of moths.

The Parish of Howick in which I live is about 3000 feet above the sea. being about 1000. feet higher than Maritzburg it has what I may call a backbone of lofty & deeply wooded hills. known as the Howick bush. & the Dargle bush. divided by the main up country road. & railway. but originally forming a part of the long narrow strip of Bush running from the Berg. (Drakensberg) to the sea. of which there are still indications sufficient to trace it by. this line of hills. at right angles to the Berg form the watershed of the Umgeni River & the tributaries

Kaaikloof River. which run through a high but level plains until they both seek a lower level. which begins but a few hundred yds from where I sit the whole country falling away suddenly - forming enormous Kranlys. down which at different places. (previous to their junction both rivers plunge. in steps seek of 360. (Howick) & 300 seek (Karkloof) falls afterwards by a series of cataracts they reach the point of junction about six miles from the falls. in a valley of almost tropical climate compared to the uplands in which we live. & this still within my parish. Along the banks Thorn Bush is scattered. I relate all this at length in order that you may realize how singularly rich this county is in the eyes of the ornithologist - below we have the coast birds above the upcountry birds. Bush birds & high veldt birds, and aquatic birds. - I had no conception until I began to collect how great a number and variety of specimens were to be obtained. I am not keen upon making money out of the pursuit which to me is a great pleasure but I am alive to the advantages of defraying extra expenses in collecting & sending specimens. I have been working lately

Society
for the Natal Museum at
Maritzburg, which is in its in-
-fancy, & it needs friends as
Valuable Specimens are often shot
& otherwise destroyed through
the ignorance of their value
Thus I have known of no less
than three Bateleur Eagles.
destroyed by a Man. quite ready
& willing to keep them "had
he known" in this present
Season: & this is one instance
amongst many. You mention
that the College of Surgeons wants
5/- Cafrarian Birds in spirits. @
5/- I might perhaps do some-
-thing for them. But anything
I can do for your daughter
must be done at the Institute

understanding that there is to be no question of payment. & I am proud if I can be of any service to One who has done so much for Ornithology in S. africa as yourself. — I have taken very careful and accurate descriptions of a large number of S. African Birds all handled by myself & my notes are at your disposal at any time. Your book is the authority amongst Ornithologists here. though I am sure you yourself would be the first to say that there is much to be done still. I & some hundred Sportsmen think that certain of your authorities drew upon their imagination as to the color of the iris is many Specimens