

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE outcry from all quarters excepting headquarters of American ornithological science against the name of our new journal satisfies us that the best possible name is THE AUK. Were the name of this journal one which anyone could have proposed and everyone liked, it could not have been an 'inspiration.' The editors beg to say that they have copyrighted, patented, and 'called in' the following puns and pleasantries: 1. That THE AUK is an awkward name. 2. That this journal is the awkward organ of the A. O. U. (These two species, with all possible subspecies, for sale cheap at this office.) 3. That this journal should be published in New Yauk, or in the Orkney or Auckland Islands. (It is published at Boston, Mass., at \$3.00 per annum, — free to active members of the A. O. U. not in arrears for dues.) 4. That an Auk is the trade-mark of a brand of guano. (A rose by any other name, etc.) 5. That the Auk is already defunct, and THE AUK likely to follow suit. (*Mortua Alca impennis — in pennis ALCA rediviva!*) 6. That the Auk couldn't fly, and what's the use of picking out a name, etc., etc. (But the Auk could dive deeper and come up drier than any other bird, as Baird says.) 7. That THE AUK apes 'The Ibis.' (Not at all. It is a great improvement on 'Ibis.' 'Ibis' is two syllables and four letters; 'Auk' is only one syllable and three letters—a fact which bibliographers will appreciate. It is simply following a good precedent because it is good. We wish, however, that we could 'ape' or otherwise imitate 'The Ibis' in sundry particulars. We should like to make THE AUK the leading ornithological journal of America, as 'The Ibis' is of the rest of the world. We should like to make THE AUK the recognized medium of communication between all the ornithologists of this country, as 'The Ibis' is of that. We should like to take and keep the same high standard of excellence in every respect, and thus become such an acknowledged authority as 'The Ibis' is. We should like, on behalf of the A. O. U., to imitate 'The Ibis' in the courtesy and kindness already shown us on the part of the B. O. U. We should like to 'ape' or otherwise resemble 'The Ibis' in vitality and longevity. May its shadow, already 'sacred,' be cast while the pyramids stand; and may THE AUK in due time be also known of men as an 'antient and honourable foule'!)

— The publication of the long-delayed 'Water Birds' of North America, by Messrs. Baird, Brewer, and Ridgway, is at last passing rapidly through the press. The work will make two volumes, and will, in reality, form the concluding portion of the 'Ornithology' of the Geological Survey of California, Prof. J. D. Whitney, State Geologist. In general style it will be uniform with the 'Land Birds' of the California Survey, with colored figures in the text. The cost of publication will be borne jointly by Professor Whitney and Mr. Alexander Agassiz, and the work will hence appear also in the 'Memoirs of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy.' The first

volume is expected to appear about June, 1884, and the other by the beginning of 1885.

—Mr. C. B. Cory, has in preparation a work of the birds of Haiti and Santo Domingo. It will be uniform in size with his 'Birds of the Bahamas,' and will give figures of many of the species. It will be issued in four or five parts, the first of which may be expected to appear about March 1.

—Dr. Coues's new 'Key to North American Birds' will doubtless shortly appear, the composition being nearly completed. We have seen stereo proofs to p. 669 (*Rallidæ*), and galley slips into *Laridæ*. The work will comprise about 850 pages, and about 500 cuts, many of them new. The work, entirely rewritten and greatly enlarged, consists of three parts. Part I is the author's 'Field Ornithology,' reprinted with little change. Part II, pp. 59-236, entitled 'General Ornithology,' includes an essay on the classification of birds, and a treatise on avian anatomy. Part III is the 'Systematic Synopsis of North American Birds,' in which the original brief diagnoses are expanded into more elaborate descriptions, with the addition of the characters of the genera and higher groups.

—Dr. P. L. Sclater has begun the publication of a very important 'Review of the Family *Icteridæ*' (*Ibis*, April and July, 1883), giving diagnoses and quite extended bibliographical references. One genus and several species are characterised as new, and illustrations given of a number of species not previously figured, in the two parts which have already appeared.

—The 'Ornithologist and Oölogist,' lately published by Mr. J. M. Wade of Boston, has passed into the hands of Mr. Frank B. Webster, of Pawtucket, R. I. The publisher announces that with the beginning of the new series (Vol. IX, 1884), the size of the magazine will be increased from 8 to 12 pages per number, the subscription price remaining as heretofore at \$1.00 per annum. A 'specimen' number for January, 1884, was issued about December 20, 1883, and contains the usual number of good articles and notes. There is doubtless room and need for a distinctively amateur journal like this, and we cordially wish it success.

—At a meeting of the Ridgway Ornithological Club of Chicago, held December 6, 1883, contributions to the museum and library were announced and seven corresponding members elected. Mr. B. T. Gault read a paper on the Titlark Sparrow (*Passerculus anthinus*), illustrated by specimens of the bird, nest, and eggs collected on the coast of California. Mr. A. K. Coale read a paper on the genus *Zonotrichia*, and mentioned the recent capture of three specimens of *Z. querula* at Trempeleau, Wis.

—At a recent meeting of the Nuttall Ornithological Club the following officers were re-elected for the ensuing year: President, William Brewster; Vice-president, J. Amory Jeffries; Recording Secretary, Henry A. Purdie; Corresponding Secretary and Editor, J. A. Allen; Treasurer, Charles F. Batchelder.

—The Committee of the A. O. U. on 'Classification and Nomenclature of North American Birds,' recently held an eight days' session in Washington, and determined the scope and form of the proposed new 'List' of North American birds, and formulated a set of rules for the guidance of the committee in their work. The subject of genera was carefully considered, and a considerable reduction from the number now currently recognized was agreed upon. Several days were devoted to a consideration of the principles of nomenclature, with results eminently satisfactory to the committee. Sub-committees were appointed to especially investigate all questions of synonymy, to consider the status of species and subspecies, and to elaborate and codify the rulings of the committee respecting the general principles of nomenclature. The committee worked with the utmost harmony, and adjourned to meet again some months later, to continue and, if possible, conclude their work.

—The A. O. U. Committee on 'Avian Anatomy' held a session in Washington, on December 15, and considered the desirability and possibility of preparing a general work on the anatomy of birds, to be in part based on special memoirs already extant, and in part on original research by members of the committee. The project to some degree took shape, and will be further considered. The committee on 'Classification and Nomenclature' referred to this committee a series of special investigations to determine the relationships of various groups of North American birds, whose position in the natural system has not as yet been satisfactorily assigned.

—The A. O. U. Committee on 'Migration of Birds' met in New York on December 17 to determine ways and means for carrying on their work. The circular of the Chairman, Dr. Merriam, published in this issue of 'The Auk,' shows the plan of operations agreed upon for the current year, and indicates that the work of collecting data will be pushed vigorously and on an extensive scale.

—The A. O. U. Committee on the 'European House Sparrow' have entered heartily upon their work, and have prepared a circular soliciting information from all available sources to aid them in the preparation of their report.

—The A. O. U. Committee on 'Faunal Areas' has decided to prepare as a 'report of progress' a provisional map of faunal areas for North American birds, and will enter upon the collection of data concerning the breeding and winter ranges of all the well-known species for the purpose of eventually mapping the distribution of as many species as may be practicable. For this purpose the committee decided to enlarge its numbers, and to assign particular districts to special workers.

—Dr. R. W. Shufeldt, recently on duty at Jefferson Barracks, La., has returned to Washington and is again in charge of the osteological department of the Army Medical Museum.

—Dr. Leonhard Stejneger has returned from the Commander Islands, Kamtschatka, with an extensive and valuable collection of birds and other objects of natural history, and is now engaged in writing a report for publication upon the material gathered.

—Messrs. J. Murdoch and Middleton Smith, who have been stationed at Point Barrow, Alaska, for the last two years, have returned to Washington, bringing with them a large and interesting collection of birds, which they will work up during the winter and later publish the results of their investigations.

—Mr. Lucien M. Turner, U. S. Signal Observer at Ungava, Northern Labrador, has shipped to the National Museum an immense collection, embracing more than a thousand bird-skins. These will be held until Mr. Turner's return, a year or so hence, when he will prepare a report upon them to be published by the National Museum.

—Mr. Chas. H. Townsend is collecting birds, etc., for the National Museum in Northern California, the central point of his explorations being Baird, Shasta County. During the summer he ascended Mt. Shasta, and made a collection of the birds which breed on that lofty peak.

—Mr. L. Belding, who has so successfully explored the southern extremity of Lower California, is now making collections in the vicinity of San Diego.

—Mr. José C. Zeledon, of San José, Costa Rica, occasionally sends collections, including mostly new or very rare species, to the National Museum.

—Mr. C. C. Nutting has returned from a very successful reconnoissance of Nicaragua, bringing with him about one hundred and thirty species of birds new to the fauna of that country and six new to science.

—Mr. P. L. Jouy, who has been making a collection of Japanese birds for the National Museum, is now in Corea studying and collecting the birds, etc., of that little-known country.

—Mr. Wm. J. Fisher, U. S. Tidal Observer at Kadiak, Alaska, has sent collections of much interest to the National Museum, among the more noteworthy birds being the new *Æstrelata fisheri*, and another rare Petrel, the *Puffinus tenuirostris*.