

CORRESPONDENCE.

[Correspondents are requested to write briefly and to the point. No attention will be paid to anonymous communications.]

Republication in 'The Auk' of Descriptions of New North American Birds.—A Suggestion.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE AUK:—

Sirs: I would like to make a suggestion or two in relation to 'The Auk' as the organ of the A. O. U. One is that in future descriptions of new species or varieties of North American birds, unless originally published in 'The Auk,' be republished in that journal in the next succeeding number, either verbatim or with sufficient fullness to give the diagnostic points, habitat, etc., of the new forms. This may seem objectionable to the (comparatively) few ornithologists to whom the original descriptions are always promptly sent; but many first hear of the new forms by a brief statement in 'The Auk,' announcing the fact of their description, long after the original description appeared. Probably on an average less than two pages of each number would suffice for such a purpose, and I do not think they could be used in a more satisfactory way. I understand the reason for publishing certain descriptions in such a medium as, for instance, the 'Proceedings' of the Biological Society of Washington, but that does not make such place of publication any less inconvenient to many readers of 'The Auk.'

The second suggestion is that each new form, when described, *if recognized by the authority that is about to publish the standard list of North American birds*, be given a special number or designation by which it shall be known in check lists, indicating its position among its allies, and the official opinion of admitted authority as to its claims to recognition.

It seems to me that both these suggestions are practical and useful.

J. C. MERRILL, U. S. A.

Columbus Barracks,

Columbus Ohio. August, 1885.

NOTES AND NEWS.

As previously announced, the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held in New York City, beginning Tuesday, November 17. The place of meeting will be, as previously, at the American Museum of Natural History, 77th Street and 8th Avenue. In addition to the reports of Committees, and the usual routine business of such an occasion, it is hoped that a good list of scientific papers will be presented, and that the meeting will be fully attended.

AT the September meeting of the Ridgway Ornithological Club of Chicago, Dr. Alfred Dahlberg was elected to membership, and a paper by Mr. F. L. Grundvig, entitled 'Notes on the Habits of the Birds of Outagamie County, Wis.,' was read.

THE A. O. U. Committee on the Classification and Nomenclature of North American Birds are pleased to believe that the results of their labors will soon be accessible to the public. Their report, the character of which has already been indicated (see *anted*, pp. 318), will form an octavo volume of about 300 pages, and will doubtless be on sale by December 1, and possibly at the time of the annual meeting of the Union in November. Information as to price, etc., may be found in the advertisement pages of the present number of 'The Auk.'

UNDER the title 'A Nomenclature of Colors for the use of Naturalists, and a Compendium of Useful Knowledge for Ornithologists,' Mr. Robert Ridgway has prepared a work, shortly to be published by Little, Brown & Co., of Boston, that cannot fail to be of great convenience and usefulness to naturalists in general, and ornithologists in particular. The work will make an octavo volume of about 150 pages, illustrated by ten colored plates, and several others of outline figures, uncolored. It consists, as the title indicates, of two parts; the first, 'Nomenclature of Colors,' embracing a general dissertation on the principles of color, a chapter of useful hints on the technique of the subject, and an extensive vocabulary of colors, as designated in most of the current European languages. The second part, or 'Ornithologists' Compendium,' includes a glossary of terms used in descriptive ornithology, a comparative scale of standard systems of linear measurement, as the English and the decimal, and tables showing the equivalent of the English inch and its subdivisions in centimeters. The plates, besides representing, with their names, nearly two hundred more or less distinct tints, give the outlines of the principal forms of color-making, outline figures of egg-contours, and details of the external anatomy of birds, with reference to the terms used in descriptive ornithology. The work is the result of years of labor on the part of the author, whose fitness for the task, both as an artist and an ornithologist, is too well known to require comment. The need of a work of just this unique and useful character has long been felt by all working naturalists, and its appearance will doubtless be welcomed as a valuable boon.

THE Smithsonian Institution has recently accepted for publication from Dr. R. W. Shufeldt, U. S. A., a collection of memoirs on the osteology of birds. They will make an octavo volume of some 400 pages, illustrated with 18 lithographic plates and nearly 200 cuts in the text, forming by far the most extensive publication on this subject this country has yet produced. Collectively these memoirs will be entitled 'Contributions to the Anatomy of North American Vertebrates.' The first is on the osteology of *Circus*, and is intended as an introduction to the osteology of the North

American Falconidæ. The second, entitled 'Osteological studies of the Subfamily Ardeinæ,' presents a full account of the skeleton in *Ardea*, with references to other genera of Herons. The third, and by far the most important, is devoted to the 'Osteology of the North American Alcidae,' and includes comparisons with several of the higher groups. Dr. Shufeldt having had in his hands the entire collection of the skeletons of the Arctic birds gathered by the Alaskan expeditions, his extensive material will doubtless enable him to throw much light upon the affinities of the groups treated, so far as their osteology may serve to indicate them, since his results, we understand, are to be given in great detail, in the form of carefully prepared analytical tables.

DR. William Wood, the well-known Connecticut ornithologist, died suddenly at his residence in East Windsor Hill, Conn., on Sunday, August 9, at the age of 63 years. He was born at Somers, Conn., and was the son of the Rev. Luke Wood of that town. In 1861 he published in the 'Hartford [Conn.,] Times' a series of twenty-one original papers on the 'Raptacious Birds of Connecticut,' and since that date articles from his pen on the same and a few other species have appeared, from time to time, in the 'American Naturalist,' 'Familiar Science and Fancier's Journal,' 'Ornithologist and Oölogist,' and in the 'Hartford Times.' His collection of birds and eggs is quite extensive, being especially rich in examples representing the different phases of plumage of the Hawks. We understand that an effort is being made to have the entire collection, including his mammals and numerous Indian curiosities, removed to Hartford, Conn., for permanent preservation.

DR. H. A. Atkins, a well-known ornithologist of Michigan, died at his home in Locke, Ingham Co., Mich., on the 19th of May, at the age of 63 years. Dr. Atkins was a frequent contributor for many years to the 'Ornithologist and Oölogist,' and occasional notes from his pen were published in the 'Bulletin' of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, the 'American Naturalist,' and elsewhere.

SEVERAL new natural history serials have appeared within the last three months which give more or less attention to ornithology, among which are the following: 'The Hoosier Naturalist,' published monthly at Valparaiso, Ind., of which the first number is dated August, 1885; 'The Naturalists' Companion,' a monthly published at Brockport, N. Y., the first number of which is dated July, 1885; and 'The Agassiz Journal,' a monthly published at Lynn, Mass., of which three or four numbers have already appeared. With this journal has been merged 'The Young Oölogist,' formerly published at Albion, N. Y., and also the 'Naturalists' Advertiser and American Osprey.' 'The Museum,' formerly published at Philadelphia, has been merged with the 'American Antiquarian,' published at Clinton, Wisc.

DURING the present year the British Museum has received three especially noteworthy accessions to its collection of birds. "The first is the celebrated collection of American Passeres, formed by P. L. Sclater, Esq., F. R. S., in the course of the last thirty years. It contains most of the material on which the majority of the publications of this ornithologist were based, and is, perhaps, the first collection of its kind that was made, at least in this country, with a clear understanding of the great importance of well-ascertained localities." The second is the celebrated Salvin-Godman collection. "Formed with the same care as the Sclater collection, it surpasses this latter as regards the number of specimens, illustrating more fully the geographical range and diversity of plumage of each species. Besides the specimens obtained by the donors themselves during their travels in Central America, or by collectors who worked for them, it contains a very complete series of South American birds." The third is the immense Hume collection of Asiatic birds, which has lately been transferred from Simla under the personal superintendence of Mr. Sharpe himself. This, doubtless the largest private collection of birds ever formed, filled eighty-two large cases when packed for transportation, and numbers about 63,000 skins, besides 300 nests, and 18,600 eggs. About 2000 species are included, so that in the average each species is represented by a series of about thirty skins. Of the considerable number of duplicates that will be eliminated, a complete set has to be transmitted, by the wish of the donor, to the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Harvard College.