

The faunal synopsis is preceded by an introduction which treats of the distribution of the species in the region in general, and in the different botanical zones of the country. Then follows a bibliography of the ornithological literature relating to Lapland, apparently very full, sufficiently detailed, and embracing 113 separate titles. This large material is admirably handled when treating each individual species, which is preceded by a complete synonymy of all the published records of its occurrence within the region. It is only to be regretted that he should have paid any attention at all (cf. p. 210 in regard to *Falco candicans*) to Rev. Bowden's miserable 'The Naturalist in Norway,' for a worse fraud and humbug, as far as the ornithology at least is concerned, has never been published.

In the synopsis the author follows Dresser's arrangement and nomenclature; a course to be specially commended.

Altogether Mr. Pleske's book makes a most welcome addition to ornithological literature, and we most heartily congratulate him upon its completion.—L. S.

W. E. Brooks on the Genus *Acanthis*.—Mr. Brooks, the well-known Indian Ornithologist, now living in Milton, Ontario, has recently contributed to 'The Ibis' two papers* on the Redpolls, especially the American species. The final result to which Mr. Brooks has arrived, he gives as follows: "We have, then, five very well-marked species of *Acanthis*, viz. *A. hornemanni*, *A. exilipes*, *A. rostrata*, *A. linaria*, and *A. rufescens*; also one doubtful bird, *A. linaria holbelli*." Of this latter he says: "To me it is not a thoroughly satisfactory species, like the others, but at present its long bill is not easily accounted for. I am not partial to the trinomial system, but for convenience' sake this bird might stand as *Acanthis linaria holbelli*. It is a variation not yet thoroughly worked out." The present reviewer, who, on an earlier page of this number of 'The Auk,' has attempted to put this form on a satisfactory footing, feels quite satisfied with this admission of Mr. Brooks, who, it must be remembered, is an opponent of the theory of evolution, and to whom a form must be a 'full' species or nothing. On the other hand it is very gratifying to find one's views in regard to so difficult a group as the Redpolls shared and sustained by an ornithologist of so great power of discrimination as Mr. Brooks, whose statements the present writer is glad to indorse in most cases. The differences of opinion between Mr. Brooks and myself relate directly to the question of 'species or subspecies,' or perhaps 'binomials or trinomials,' differences which, in fact, are quite unessential.—L. S.

Stejneger on Japanese Woodpeckers.—The first of a series of papers on Japanese birds, published in the 'Proceedings' of the United States

* Stray Ornithological Notes. Ibis, 1885, pp. 380-389; the portion relating to *Acanthis* on pp. 381-385. Additional Notes on the Genus *Acanthis*. Ibis, 1886, pp. 359-364.

National Museum, treats of the Woodpeckers,* of which ten species are recognized, and also one subspecies, the latter and two of the species being described as new. Questions of synonymy are treated in detail, and the references to previous writers on the species appear to be given with fullness. The paper is accompanied by a colored plate.

As Dr. Stejneger points out in his introductory remarks, the ornithology of Japan offers an inviting field, in which very little discriminating work has yet been done. "Formerly," says Dr. Stejneger, "it was sufficient to know that a bird was from 'Japan.' If the description of a Japanese species was found to fit a Japanese specimen approximately, the latter was identified as that species without further comparison. If the original specimen was described from Nagasaki, and the second one, believed to be the same, came from North Yesso, the habitat of the species was given as embracing the whole of Japan." Our knowledge of Japanese ornithology is at present only fragmentary, large portions of this great country being as yet almost unexplored, while some of it "is a complete *terra incognita*, ornithologically speaking." "American ornithologists," Dr. Stejneger well observes, "will not wonder at hearing that species apt to break up into local forms have done so in a group of islands which in extent corresponds to the coast from the Gulf of California to Vancouver Island, or from the southern extremity of Florida to Nova Scotia, with a variation of climate fully as great as that of the two last mentioned localities; with high mountain ranges, and studded with volcanoes eight thousand to twelve thousand feet high; with a vegetation . . . characterized in the south by the bamboo, the rice, the mulberry tree, and the tea-plant, while in the north the firs form extensive forests, and with a temperature ranging from the almost Siberian winters of Yesso, to the tropical heats of Kiu-Shin,' it would indeed be an extraordinary phenomenon, and quite reverse to what takes place in other countries of similarly varying conditions, were the birds of Japan uniform all through that empire."

The present paper is announced as the first of a series of "preliminary reviews of some of the most perplexing groups in order to solicit specimens and advice from fellow ornithologists, and to induce those who have the opportunity to attempt the solution of some of the questions, if possible, in the field." As already stated (Auk, III, p. 495), the author has the "intention to write a comprehensive and reliable guide to Japanese ornithology, with ample descriptions of all the known forms, from original Japanese specimens," and he appeals for aid in the way of material for carrying out his purpose.—J. A. A.

Stejneger on the British Marsh-Tit.—Dr. Stejneger has separated† the British Marsh-Tit, under the name *Parus palustris dresseri*, from the European form, from which it differs in being darker in color, with a shorter

* Review of Japanese Birds. By Leonhard Stejneger. I. The Woodpeckers. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. VIII, pp. 99-124, pl. ii. Published Sept., 1886.

† The British Marsh-Tit. By Leonhard Stejneger. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1866, pp. 200, 201.