

Pooecætes gramineus.

Sylvania canadensis. A few in various parts of the island.

Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Turdus alicia* or *T. a. bicknelli*?) (Migrant?)

It may be well to note also the following species, not observed in the Bras d'Or region, but met with in other parts of the island:—

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*?). One at Ingonish.

Merganser serrator. Indian Brook.

Totanus melanoleucus. North shore. (Doubtless migrants.)

Philohela minor. Indian Brook.

Loxia leucoptera. One at Ingonish.

Dendroica blackburniæ. One near Indian Brook.

Sitta canadensis. One heard at Margaree Forks.

The matter in parentheses above is mine, the rest Mr. Bolles's. In some cases I have quoted from his recent book 'From Blomidon to Smoky.' Considering the location of Cape Breton and the known habitats of these birds, it seems reasonable to conclude that they had all bred on the island, except where otherwise noted.—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Mass.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

A Demand for English Names.

TO THE EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sirs:—For a considerable period my mind has been wrought up over what I conceive to be a sin of omission on the part of our well beloved and sincerely admired American mammalogists and ornithologists. As to the deeds or misdeeds of the latter, I have personally not so much practical concern; but inasmuch as the mammalogists have no publication of their own, it is necessary to reach them through 'The Auk,' or not at all.

My grievance is found in the frequency with which new species of mammals and birds are described and turned loose upon the reading world with Latin names only. Whether this is due to indifference to the wants of unscientific readers, to disbelief in the value of popular names, or to the limitations of our mother tongue, I am unable to state. But, whatever the cause, in behalf of the unscientific public, I protest that it is time for a radical reform on this point amongst our investigators.

As an illustration of the alarming increase of the no-name series of mammals, let us take Mr. Walter E. Bryant's admirable list of 'Recent Additions to the North American Land Mammal Fauna' (Zoe, III, p. 201) which enumerates all the new species that were described from 1884 to 1892. Out of 155 species and subspecies absolutely new, 85 were launched upon the English-speaking world with no English names whatever, and with no names understandable to any but really good Latin scholars. In other words, the 85 new species have, to about 999 persons out of every 1000, practically no names whatever! Now, when considerably over one-half of the new species of our highest vertebrates are given to us (I mean the 999) practically nameless, it surely is time to protest.

Of the 85 nameless species referred to, a somewhat hurried count reveals the following list of shortcomers: Merriam is responsible for 58, J. A. Allen 8, — and a very, very few it is, considering the great number of new species described by him — Mearns 5, True 4, Chapman 4, Miller 2, and Shufeldt, Bryant, Stephens and H. Allen, 1 each.

From the above showing we may fairly estimate the number of additional christenings that are necessary amongst the 150 more new species (according to Dr. Allen's figures) that have been added to our fauna since the publication of Mr. Bryant's list.

Now as to the equities in the case. The technologist may say: "But we are not describing new species for the benefit of the ignorant and unscientific public; and the professional zoölogists of the world will find our nomenclature quite sufficient." Let us see about that.

In the first place, it is the money and the friendly interest of the unscientific public that alone enables science to breathe the breath of life, to eat, drink and have a being; for as yet the unscientific are rather in the majority. It is the Tom Joneses and Bill Smiths whose bank accounts "pay the freight" for Professor This and Doctor That; and are not the Joneses and the Smiths entitled to some consideration in the matter of published information regarding our own fauna?

If I can read signs aright, the gap between our really scientific zoölogists (speaking generally) and the unscientific public, is growing wider and wider, day by day. The trouble is simply that *the former publish so very little that the latter can understand!* Zoölogical knowledge is increasing tremendously—amongst the scientific few; but amongst the people generally, I believe it is decreasing frightfully, in spite of our museums. All of which, as the newspapers say, is "important if true."

And furthermore; in the naming *and the measuring* of an animal, *why* should 120,000,000 English speaking people ever be ignored? Latin names are only a sort of necessary evil anyway. Many of them are so long and overwhelming that if a man does not want to be laughed at, or accused of wanting to "show off," he must choose his hearers with care before using them. Tell a newspaper managing editor that you have got a *Taxidea americana neglecta*, and the chances are ten to one that he will

think it is some new kind of a tape-worm, and advise you to go and see a doctor right away. But if you wish to talk about that particular animal, you must use that name or none; for it seems as if the author and finisher of that new subspecies forgot to say whether it was a California Badger, or simply a Neglected Badger. Evidently the latter would now be the most appropriate name for it.

I complain because in the matter of nomenclature the general public does not always get a show at the thing described. I complain also, incidentally, because nearly all our investigators have decided that in the matter of measurements they will do precisely as the French and German naturalists desire,—discard English inches and hundredths thereof, and follow the French metric system only. It is a case of the tail wagging the dog. It would be just as fair to the 120,000,000 of English readers,—not more than about 1200 of whom care one rap for the metric system,—to go full length, and write descriptions in a foreign language also; for with both names and measurements in foreign form, the description itself is often quite worthless so far as ordinary mortals are concerned.

Standing as I do, outside the charmed circle, yet somewhat in touch with the general public,—which most of our scientific investigators unhappily *are not*,—I have been moved to state how these things strike a private in the ranks. It seems to me it is the imperative duty of every author who has ever given us a new species of mammal or bird without a good, distinctive English name, to confess his sins, and make good every such deficiency without loss of time. I would like to see the next number of 'The Auk' contain a full list of what is now lacking in mammalian names. Of course, any one sufficiently interested, whether a Latin scholar or not, can take a Latin dictionary, find out what a strange Latin name means, and then select an English equivalent to suit himself. But that is clearly inadmissible. The author of the species is the only proper person to select and bestow upon it an English name. If a fair amount of thought and *originality* is given to the selection of a popular name, the chances are that it will be sharply distinctive, easy to remember, and, in a vast majority of cases, just as useful to English-speaking naturalists as any machine-made Latin name.

Very respectfully,

W. T. HORNADAY.

Buffalo, N. Y.,

Oct., 1894.