

tion of the 'Rules,' twenty-eight in number, adopted by the German Zoölogical Society for the scientific naming of animals, the explanations and comment accompanying the original rules being, however, omitted. 'Appendix II' gives a convenient list of 'Titles of the principal Modern Codes of Zoölogical Nomenclature,' eleven in number.

The discussion following Mr. Sclater's paper included a communication from Graf Hans von Berlepsch, and remarks by Sir William Flower, Mr. Hartert, Professor Lankester, Mr. Elwes, Dr. D. Sharp, Mr. W. T. Blandford, Dr. H. O. Forbes, and Mr. W. F. Kirby. In the main their views are so inharmonious, aside from the three main points under discussion, as to discourage the hope of an immediate general agreement on principles of nomenclature. Some of the writers favored the Xth edition and others the XIIth edition of Linnæus as the starting point; some even seemed doubtful about taking either, but favored the selection of some much more recent period—some standard work for any branch of zoölogy where such a work is available, taking the names there given, whether right or wrong, and in defiance even of the law of priority. It was also suggested that International Committees be appointed, "not to draw up a Code of rules, but to produce an *authoritative* list of names—once and for all—about which no lawyer-like haggling should hereafter be permitted"! Any attempt to combat such crude notions would evidently be a waste of energy!

Professor Lankester, "thought the XIIth edition of the 'Systema Naturæ' should be adopted as the starting point of Zoölogical Nomenclature, as a tribute of respect to Linnæus, since it was the last edition of that work and contained Linnæus's revised list of genera and species" Mr. Hartert thought that the Xth edition of this work should be taken as the correct starting point, "because in that edition Linnæus first made use of the binary system of nomenclature; and as the question of justness had been mentioned he considered that it would be unjust to authors who created names between the dates of the two editions, if the twelfth were adopted; he was, moreover, of opinion that if the XIIth edition were adopted, because it contained corrections and emendations of the older edition, it would make a bad precedent, and that any other author might, if so inclined, claim to alter his original names after he had created and published them, and so cause confusion." We give this as the gist of the whole argument on the matter of the two editions, and commend Mr. Hartert's clever *reductio ad absurdum*.—J. A. A.

**Swann's Handbook of British Birds.**—This little manual<sup>1</sup> is certainly what its title implies—a *concise* handbook of British Birds, or, as claimed in the preface, "a handy textbook of reference," small enough

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<sup>1</sup> A Concise Handbook | of | British Birds | By | H. Kirke Swann | Editor  
of "The Ornithologist." | — | London: | John Wheldon & Co., | 58, Great  
Queen Street, W. C. | 1896. 16 mo, pp. viii+210.

to be easily carried in the pocket. In view of the many 'manuals' and 'handbooks' of British birds, its compact form and small size must be its main *raison d'être*. There is no introductory matter beyond the preface, no diagnoses of the higher groups, no analytical keys, no general analysis of the avifauna as regards the manner of occurrence of the species, and, finally, no index! As 381 species and about a dozen additional subspecies are treated in the course of 208 pages, the descriptions are necessarily brief and the biographical matter is reduced to a minimum. Nevertheless it must serve as a "handy textbook of reference" to those who have already some knowledge of British birds, but hardly as the most convenient form of a manual for the beginner. Some 30 species usually included in British lists are "provisionally excluded," being relegated to a nominal list in the Appendix, on the ground that their "recorded occurrences are either insufficiently authenticated or somewhat improbable."

The classification and nomenclature is practically that of the B. O. U. List, "but a number of necessary alterations have been made, particularly in the matter of adopting the specific names of the *first* describers as far as possible. An effort has also been made to allow specific rank to valid species only, while subspecies or races, instead of being nameless, are distinguished by sub-numbers and trinomials—after the American style." He adds that he does not expect to "escape censure for adopting the despised system, yet until some of our ornithologists can suggest some other way of allowing a name to a recognized race without giving it the rank of a species, I will adhere to trinomials." He says further that with the exception of the late Henry Seebohm, "no British ornithologist appears to have openly avowed himself a trinomialist." He is not, however, quite so destitute of good company as a trinomialist among his own countrymen as he seems to suppose, as witness the use of trinomials by numerous British naturalists, and their recent formal approval by Mr. Sclater (see above, p. 327) — J. A. A.

**Loomis on California Water Birds.**<sup>1</sup>—Mr. Loomis continues his studies of the Water Birds of the Californian coast by a visit to South Farallon Island from July 8 to 16, 1896. Interesting notes are given on the habits of the ten species of Water Birds found nesting there, with remarks on four so-called "non-indigenous" species.

Speaking of the wholesale robbery of Murre's eggs to supply the San Francisco market, Mr. Loomis says: "It is apparent that unless this devastation is put an end to, the Farallon Murre rookeries will ere long belong to the past. A State law prohibiting the sale of eggs of wild birds and prompt action on the part of the lighthouse board will preserve this

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<sup>1</sup> California Water Birds. No. III. South Farallon Island in July. By Leverett M. Loomis, Curator of the Department of Ornithology. Proc. Cal. Acad. Sci., Ser. 2, Vol. XI, pp.353-366, 2 maps.