

Newton's insistence upon the importance of taking a bird's whole structure in consideration in the attempt to fix its position in a natural genetic classification. Such insistence is well exemplified in the care Professor Newton takes to place in their proper light Professor Fürbringer's recent remarkable contributions to systematic ornithology (pp. 100-103), together with those of Dr. Gadow — neither of whom is so well known, in this country, as each deserves to be.

The remainder of the Introduction is devoted to what may be deemed the present outlook for the taxonomy of the future. Those who did not know Professor Newton's extreme caution and conservatism might perhaps expect to find him propounding a system of his own; but such will look in vain. We have carefully guarded statements on many points which seem to have been established; but beyond these Professor Newton is unprepared to go. Audacity and even temerity have their uses, on some occasions, but the construction of an Avian phylum is not among the opportunities for a profitable display of such qualities — tempting and alluring though the prospect may seem to some ardent minds. The geological record remains to this day altogether too incomplete. No one has yet flown to the Jura except on the wings of the imagination; and until a safer mode of progression in that direction be opened, with a plentiful supply of the still missing links for stepping-stones, the natural classification of birds will remain a vision of Utopia.

We should not close this tribute to the great work of a great ornithologist without recognition of those by whom he has been so ably aided in its execution — in ornithotomy by Dr. Gadow, whose contributions are conspicuous throughout the volume; in palæornithology by Mr. Lydekker; in other lines by Professor Roy; certain other contributions we do not see fit to name being fortunately too few and too insignificant to appreciably detract from the standard of excellence elsewhere maintained throughout the 'Dictionary.' — E. C.

Bates's 'The Game Birds of North America.'¹ — Mr. Bates's definition of a game bird is the following: "A game bird is one which is suitable for food and which is habitually pursued for sport, demanding skill and dexterity for its capture. I take it for granted that every sportsman is a gentleman, and would not slaughter more game than he could find a use for, and that he would not descend to the level of the pot-hunter, who will kill Robins and other insectivorous birds simply because they are fit to eat." The book is intended as "a convenient reference list adapted to the sportsman's needs without compelling him to wander among a mass of useless matter." Judged by this standard the author has apparently prepared a handy book for the intelligent sportsman, whereby he may in most

¹ The Game Birds | of North America | A Descriptive Check-List | By | Frank A. Bates | President "Boston Scientific Society," and formerly | Associate Editor "Ornithologist and Oologist." | Illustrated | Boston | Bradlee Whidden | 1896—16mo, pp. 118.

cases, doubtless, easily learn the names of the game birds that fall before his gun. The few outline figures of bills and feet given in the text must be of service in aiding in the determination. In most cases about a page is devoted to each species, consisting of a more or less detailed description, followed by remarks on distribution, habits, and quality of the flesh as food. In all 124 species and subspecies are formally treated, beginning with the Loons and ending with the Passenger Pigeon. The few technical inaccuracies here and there need not necessarily detract from the value of the book for the class for which it is intended.—J. A. A.

Butler on a Century of Changes in the Aspects of Nature in Indiana.¹—As the title indicates, this paper is not exclusively ornithological, but contains, among much matter of general interest, several passages that depict the changes in the bird fauna of Indiana due to the occupation of the country by the white man,—the marked decrease or practical extirpation of some species, and the increase and changes in habits of others. Among the species “almost, or in great measure, exterminated” are the Wild Turkey, Bobwhite, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Black Vulture, Carolina Paroquet, and Passenger Pigeon. Of the latter Mr. Butler writes, after detailing the methods of slaughter: “Less and less the numbers grew. Trapping and netting, supplemented by repeating guns, added to the power of destruction, and the Pigeons, whose numbers were once so great that no one could conceive the thought of their extinction, have dwindled until they are rarely found. One Pigeon in a year! Soon they will be but a memory.” The destruction of birds to supply the demands of fashion also receives attention as one of the causes that have led to their decrease.—J. A. A.

Elliot's Catalogue of a Collection of Birds from Somali-Land.²—While the main object of Mr. Elliot's expedition into Somali-Land, under the auspices of the Field Columbian Museum, was to procure specimens of the mammals inhabiting that country, quite a collection of birds was also incidentally obtained, a report on which Mr. Elliot has thus promptly published. He states that he was never in a country “where birds were more numerous and tame, and an expedition properly equipped for bird collecting, could procure a very large series of specimens in a very short time.” The collection formed by Mr. Elliot's party numbers 125 species, of which 8 are described as new. The annotations include interesting field notes on the habits and relative abundance of many of the species, together with some technical and other notes.—J. A. A.

¹ Indiana: A Century of Changes in the Aspects of Nature. By A. W. Butler. Proc. Indiana Acad. Sci., No. V, 1895, pp. 31-42.

² Catalogue of a Collection of Birds obtained by the [Field Columbian Museum] Expedition into Somali-Land. By D. G. Elliot, F. R. S. E. Field Columbian Museum Publication 17. Ornith. Series, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 29-67. Chicago, Feb., 1897.