

Grass Finch, *Poocetes gramineus*; Savanna Sparrow, *Ammodramus sandwichensis savanna*; Chipping Sparrow, *Spizella socialis*; Song Sparrow, *Melospiza fasciata*; Swamp Sparrow, *Melospiza georgiana*; Blue-headed Vireo, *Vireo solitarius*; Hermit Thrush, *Turdus aonalaschkæ pallasii*; Meadowlark, *Sturnella magna*; Mourning Dove, *Zenaidura macroura*; Killdeer, *Ægialitis vocifera*; Bluebird, *Sialia sialis*; Catbirds, *Galeoscoptes carolinensis*; Pine Warbler, *Dendroica vigosii*.

Bluebirds and Pine Warblers were decimated. Mockingbirds, Cardinals, Florida Towhees, Carolina Wrens, and all Woodpeckers escaped. — ARTHUR T. WAYNE, *Mount Pleasant, S. C.*

RECENT LITERATURE.

Volume XXVI of the British Museum Catalogue of Birds.¹ — Volume XXVI of the British Museum Catalogue of Birds is the last to appear of the twenty-seven volumes constituting this magnificent series, Volume XXVII having been previously issued. The first volume of this great work appeared in June, 1874, the others following at irregular intervals of, in the average, rather less than a year, the last volume having been brought out towards the close of 1898. As a general work on the birds of the world, no preceding treatise from the time of Linnæus to the present day, is at all to be compared with it in point of completeness or in method of treatment. To say that it marks an era in the history of ornithology is only faintly to imply its vast importance.

We learn from the Preface of this last volume, by Sir W. H. Flower, Director of the Natural History Department of the British Museum, that this great undertaking was originally projected by Dr. Albert Günther, his predecessor in the office of Director, "more than twenty-five years

¹ Catalogue | of the | Platealæ, Herodiones, Steganopodes, | Pygopodes, Alcæ, and Impennes | in the | Collection | of the | British Museum. | — (Platealæ) Ibises and Spoon-bills) | and | Herodiones (Hérons and Storks), | by | R. Bowdler Sharpe. | Steganopodes (Cormorants, Gannets, Frigate-Birds, Tropic- | Birds, and Pelicans), Pygopodes (Divers and Grebes), | Alcæ (Auks), and Impennes (Penguins), | by | W. R. Ogilvie-Grant. | London : | Printed by order of the Trustees. | Sold by | Longmans & Co., 39 Paternoster Row, E. C. ; | B. Quaritch, 15 Piccadilly, W. ; Dulau & Co., 37 Soho Square, W. ; | Kegan Paul, French, Trübner, & Co., Charing Cross Road, W. C. ; | and at the | British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, S. W. | 1898. = Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum, Vol. XXVI. 8vo, pp. xvii + 687, pll. i-ic, ii, ii α , iii, iv, v-vb, vi-viii.

ago.... The publication of the work has therefore been nearly coincident with Dr. Günther's administration of the Zoological Department of the Museum. It is to him that the general arrangement and supervision of the work is due, although each contributor has been allowed a considerable latitude in following his own views as to the details of classification and nomenclature.

"It was at first contemplated that Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe would undertake the whole work, and the first four volumes were completed by him between the years 1872 to 1879. It, however, soon became apparent that continually increasing curatorial duties.... required very much of his attention, and notwithstanding the energy with which he threw himself into the work, it was manifestly impossible for him single-handed to complete the Catalogue within any reasonable time." Consequently the aid of other specialists was invoked to take up certain groups to which they had given special attention, while Dr. Sharpe did not relinquish his labors. "Not only did he materially assist in many of the volumes produced under the names of other authors, but for seven more volumes (making eleven altogether) he is entirely, and for two others he is partly, responsible. Some indication of the amount of his share in the whole work may be gained from the statement that out of 11,548 species described in the Catalogue, 5181 are contained in Dr. Sharpe's portion, and 6367 in those written by the ten other authors."

The other authors are the late Mr. Henry Seebohm, who prepared Vol. V, the family Turdidæ (1881); Dr. Hans Gadow, Vol. VIII, the families Paridæ and Laniidæ, and the Certhiomorphæ (1883), and Vol. IX, the Cinnryimorphæ (1884); Dr. P. L. Sclater, Vol. XI, the families Cœrebidæ, Tanagridæ, and Icteridæ (1886), Vol. XIV, the Oligomyodæ (1888), Vol. XV, the Tracheophonæ (1890), and part of Vol. XIX (Rhamphastidæ, Galbulidæ, and Bucconidæ); the late Mr. Osbert Salvin, part of Vol. XVI (Upupæ and Trochili) and part of Vol. XXV (Tubinares); Mr. Ernst Hartert, part of Vol. XVI (families Cypselidæ, Caprimulgidæ, Podargidæ, and Steatornithidæ); the late Edward Hargitt, Vol. XVIII, the Picidæ (1890); Capt. G. E. Shelley, part of Vol. XIX (Indicatoridæ, Capitonidæ, Cuculidæ, and Musophagidæ); Count T. Salvadori, Vol. XX, the Psittaci (1891), Vol. XXI, the Columbæ (1893), and Vol. XXVII, the Chenomorphæ, Crypturi, and Ratitæ; W. R. Ogilvie Grant, Vol. XXII the Gallinæ and Allies, and part of Vol. XXVI, the Steganopodes, Pygopodes, Alcæ, and Impennes; Mr. Howard Saunders, part of Vol. XXV, the Gaviæ.

The 'Catalogue' is based upon the immense collection of birds in the British Museum, which has increased from about 35,000 in 1872 to about 400,000 at the present time, supplemented by "all other available material contained in public or private collections, or described in zoological literature. It therefore professes to be a complete list of every bird known at the time of the publication of the volume treating of the group to which it belongs. Under the heading of each species is (1) a copious synonymy: references being given to every mention of it which occurs

in standard books or journals. [This is more nearly true of the later volumes than of many of the earlier volumes.] This has been a work of prodigious labour, but it is hoped that, being fairly exhaustive, it has been done once for all, as far as existing literature is concerned. (2) A full description of the external characters of both sexes, and, as far as possible, all stages of plumage. (3) A general account of the habitat of the species. (4) A list of every individual specimen in the Museum Collection, with a statement as to the source from whence it was obtained and its original locality." This high aim has been as nearly reached, at least in many of the volumes, as, in the nature of such things, could be reasonably expected.

The colored illustrations in these twenty-seven volumes represent (in 387 plates) 540 species not before figured, or else only inadequately, the drawings, by Keulemans, being made in almost every case "from the types of the species."

The Preface to Vol. XXVI further states that owing to the vast increase in the collection during the last twenty-five years the earlier volumes "represent a very inadequate idea, both of the present condition of the subject and the contents of the Museum Collection." It is therefore proposed to publish a Supplement, probably in two volumes, "which will contain references to every species described subsequently to the publication of the volume which treats of the group to which it belongs, and also such emendations as the progress of Zoölogy seems to require. When this is published, it will afford a complete list up to date of all known birds, either described in the Catalogue or elsewhere."

We have thus given a sketch of the history, scope, and aims of this great series of volumes,¹ in nearly the words of the Director of the Zoölogical Department of the British Museum. As shown, the plan of the work, and the general scheme of arrangement and classification, were decided upon more than a quarter of a century ago, as doubtless also the leading principles of nomenclature. Hence the twelfth edition of

¹ For notices in this journal of the volumes of the British Museum Catalogue of Birds see, for Vols. I, II, and III, Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, III, 1878, p. 77-79; Vols. IV, V, and VI, *ibid.*, VIII, 1883, pp. 99-105; Vols. VII and VIII, Auk I, 1884, pp. 277-283; Vol. IX (not reviewed); Vol. X, *ibid.*, II, 1885, pp. 365-368; Vol. XI, *ibid.*, IV, 1887, pp. 149, 150; Vol. XII, *ibid.*, V, 1888, pp. 410-413; Vol. XIII, *ibid.*, VI, 1889, pp. 266-268; Vol. XIV, *ibid.*, VIII, 1891, pp. 90-92; Vol. XV, *ibid.*, VII, 1890, pp. 379, 380; Vols. XVI and XVII, *ibid.*, X, 1893, pp. 66-69; Vol. XVIII, *ibid.*, VIII, 1891, pp. 92-95; Vol. XIX, *ibid.*, IX, 1892, p. 184; Vol. XX, *ibid.*, IX, 1892, pp. 277-279; Vol. XXI, *ibid.*, XI, 1894, pp. 60-62; Vol. XXII, *ibid.*, XI, 1894, pp. 171, 172; Vol. XXIII, *ibid.*, XI, 1894, p. 242; Vol. XXIV, *ibid.*, XIV, 1897, pp. 102-104; Vol. XXV, *ibid.*, XIII, 1896, pp. 160-162; Vol. XXVI, *ibid.*, XVI, 1899, pp. 198-203; Vol. XXVII, *ibid.*, XIII, 1896, pp. 162-164.

Linnæus's 'Systema Naturæ' has been taken as the starting point for binomial nomenclature, and with slight exceptions, strictly adhered to throughout the whole series of volumes, notwithstanding the fact that in recent years the tenth edition of the 'Systema' has become the general starting point. It therefore unhappily follows that in many cases the names, both generic and specific, adopted in the 'Catalogue', are not in harmony with those that must stand, according to the present consensus of opinion on this important point.

Again, the use of trinomials for the designation of subspecies had not become greatly in vogue, at the time the 'Catalogue' was begun, and although several of the authors engaged on this work had adopted them at the time they prepared their respective portions, the original plan of employing binomials for all forms recognized was adhered to the end. In respect to the '*Scomber scomber* principle', the rule has varied, the different authors having been apparently left to their own inclinations in this matter, with the result that some have retained specific names for the species to which they were originally given when later used as generic names, while some have not, thus giving rise to instability in a large number of names, whatever the ruling may be respecting the '*Scomber scomber* principle.'

A uniform method has been employed in designating type species, namely, by giving the name as it stands under the genus to which it is referred by the author of the 'Catalogue' instead of the full name, generic and specific, given it by its original describer. This is not a serious matter, but one frequently giving rise to some inconvenience if one desires to go over the ground for himself.

Marked improvement in respect to the fullness and character of the bibliographical citations has marked the progress of the work, the later volumes well meeting the most rigid requirements, while the earlier volumes were deficient and variable in point of completeness, and defective as regards the scope of the reference, even generally omitting, in the case of special works, the highly convenient and often important item of date. In other words, the authors have kept well in touch with the improved methods that have characterized in this respect, ornithological literature in general. The last seven or eight volumes are far in advance of most of their predecessors, while some of the later ones leave little to be desired in the way of further improvement.

Passing now to Volume XXVI, it is enough to say, by way of general remark, that in method of treatment and completeness it is equal to the best of the series. It embraces the Plataleæ (Ibises and Spoonbills) and Herodiones (Hérons and Storks), by Dr. Sharpe, and the Steganopodes (Cormorants, Gannets, Frigate Birds, Tropic Birds and Pelicans), the Pygopodes (Divers and Grebes), the Alcæ (Auks), and the Impennes (Penguins), by Mr. Ogilvie Grant. The Plataleæ number 33 species, with 21 genera, and the Herodiones, 120 species with 48 genera; the Steganopodes number 66 species, with 6 genera; the Pygopodes 52 species,

with 17 genera; the Impennes 17 species with 6 genera. All but ten of the species are represented in the British Museum collection. In the Platalea and Herodiones Mr. Sharpe retains the redundancy of genera which has characterized his recent volumes of the 'Catalogue' and his preliminary papers on these two groups, the average being $1\frac{1}{2}$ species to the genus in the former and $2\frac{1}{2}$ species to the genus in the latter. On the other hand Mr. Grant is very conservative, the average for the Steganopodes being 11 species to a genus, with 37 in *Phalacrocorax*, under which genus no subgenera are recognized.

As regards North American species, there are many departures from the A. O. U. Check-List through taking Linnæus's names at 1766 instead of 1758, and ignoring Brisson's genera, and others for other reasons. *Eudocimus*, though preoccupied by *Eudocima*, in Lepidoptera, is used in preference to *Guara*, the first strictly tenable name for the genus. All of the A. O. U. Check-List subgenera of *Ardea* are given the rank of genera, and in addition, a genus *Leucophoyx* (Sharpe, 1894) is employed for *Ardea candidissima*. Without the author having seen specimens of the South American *Ardea tricolor* it is recognized as specifically distinct from the North American *A. tricolor ruficollis*. On the other hand, *Nycticorax nycticorax nevius* is referred to *N. nycticorax*, and no subspecies are admitted in the *Butorides virescens* group.

Phalacrocorax urile (Gm.) becomes *P. bicristatus* Pallas, on the ground apparently that *urile* was originally composite. No subspecies are recognized under *P. pelagicus*, and only one, *cincinatus*, under *P. dilophus*, for the white-crested Pacific coast form, the two eastern forms being referred to *dilophus*, which name, however, gives place to *auritus* Lesson, 1831. While the untenability of *dilophus* (Vieillot *nec* Swainson) is evident, it is not quite so manifest that *auritus*, founded on Vieillot's very unsatisfactory figure of a supposed New Zealand specimen, is the correct substitute; under these circumstances it seems far better to accept *Phalacrocorax floridanus* Aud. (1835) as the proper name for the group. *P. mexicanus* is made a subspecies of the South American *P. vigua* (= *brasiliensis* auct.). The propriety of this change was previously suggested by Mr. Ridgway (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XII, 1889, p. 138).

From what we have already said about the treatment of Brissonian names, we find as a matter of course *Plotus* used in place of *Anhinga*, and Linnæus at 1766 gives *Colymbus* for the Loons, *Gavia* being disposed of as having "no type"! *Gavia arctica* is not regarded as North American, the North American birds recognized under this name by American writers being referred to *Gavia pacifica*, which latter is made a subspecies of *arctica*.

Cephus is treated as a synonym of *Uria*, the Guillemots not being awarded even subgeneric rank. Yet a new genus, *Micruria*, is proposed for two of the species of *Brachyrhamphus*—*B. hypoleucus* and *B. craveri*, the former being the type of the new genus. The name *kittlitzii* Brandt, 1837, is superceded by *brevirostris* Vigors, 1828—perhaps

justly, though it is odd that the type should have been taken at San Blas, Mexico, "August 9," this being on Aleutian Island and Kamchatkan species. *Phaleris* Temminck, 1820, is restored for the Paroquet Auklet in place of *Cyclorhynchus* Kaup, 1829, although Stejneger (Orn. Expl. in Commander Isls., 1855, p. 38) has pretty clearly shown that *Alca pygmaea* Gm. must be regarded as the type of *Phaleris*. But these are mainly points where differences of opinion are liable to occur—we fear for a long time to come. — J. A. A.

Evans's 'Birds'.¹—In a well illustrated volume of some 600 pages Mr. Evans has attempted to give "a short description of the majority of the forms in many of the Families, and of the most typical or important of the innumerable species included in the large Passerine Order." This is preceded by an introductory chapter of some 20 pages on the structural peculiarities of birds, their classification, geographical distribution, migration, etc. Mr. Evans follows Dr. Gadow's scheme of classification, "with some slight modifications." He begins, with the Archæornithes and ends with the Passere, the final family of the series being the Fringilidæ. The work being intended as a popular treatise on the Class Aves, the more strictly technical phases of the subject have been avoided, as also the discussion of disputed questions. The work is prepared in a conservative spirit, without attempt at fine writing, and without stating as fact the many theories and conjectures that have received almost unqualified endorsement in some of the recent 'popular' books on birds, bird migration, and kindred subjects. A general account is given of each family, with an enumeration of many of its principal forms, and brief reference to their distribution and characteristic traits. The text is fully illustrated with, for the most part, excellent wood cuts. A large part are admirable figures by Mr. G. E. Lodge, prepared especially for the present work, while others are by Smit, or from other sources, and are thus not unfamiliar through previous use in other connections. The volume as a whole is entitled to high commendation, and will prove of great convenience as a general account of the principal forms of bird life, both recent and extinct. — J. A. A.

Von Ihering's Birds of San Paulo, Brazil.²—This enumeration of the birds of the State of Sao Paulo is based on the collections of the Museu

¹ Birds | By A. H. Evans, M. A., Clare College, Cambridge | London | Macmillan and Co., Limited | New York: The Macmillan Company | 1899 | All rights reserved | —8vo, pp. xvi + 635, 2 maps, and 144 text figures. = The Cambridge Natural History, Vol. IX. — Price \$3.50.

² As Aves do Estado de S. Paulo. Por. H. von Ihering. Revista do Museu Paulista, Anno III, 1899, pp. 113-476.