

quantitative methods, he believes that the problems of race distinction "need the precision of the Precise Criterion."

"The contention," he continues, "that quantitative methods are less useful than those ordinarily employed because of the large amount of material required, is mischievous, for it argues that generalizations professing precision are possible by methods that are not precise," and the present tendency of hair splitting among certain ornithologists is timely and well warranted. If the hair splitters were compelled to adopt the laborious method of the 'precise criterion' system, it would doubtless prove a wholesome check upon their prolificness. In the matter of naming geographical forms which in many cases at least, will ultimately be relegated to the limbo synonymy.—J. A. A.

Stone 'On Moults and Alleged Colour-change in Birds.'¹—This paper is a reply to some criticisms of Mr. Stone's paper on moults, published in the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Academy in 1896, by Mr. J. L. Bonhote in 'The Ibis' for October 1900. Mr. Stone maintains an admirable attitude in reference to the advocates of direct change of pigment in mature feathers, and his statements should do much toward encouraging a careful consideration of the subject by his critics. Mr. Stone says: "It has now been *demonstrated* that at least many (and apparently all) individuals of every species of bird in Eastern North America which undergoes a spring change of plumage accomplish that change by a moult. If the same thing is not true of European birds, we have certainly a strange state of affairs." Mr. Stone very justly complains that the papers of Mr. Bonhote and others who defend color change are lacking in respect to data as to the condition of the specimens examined.

Mr. Stone's paper, in fact, is a brief summary of the results attained by investigations on this side of the Atlantic in reference to how birds acquire the colors of the nuptial dress, and of the methods employed in these investigations. It would seem that this candid statement of the case should lead to careful consideration of the evidence supposed to be antagonistic to the results obtained by extended and careful study of the subject by American ornithologists.—J. A. A.

Seton-Thompson and Hoffmann's 'Bird Portraits.'²—'Bird Portraits' consists of 20 half-tone reproductions of drawings by Ernest Seton-Thompson, with descriptive text by Mr. Hoffmann. The birds whose portraits are here given consist of the following species: Song Sparrow, Flicker,

¹ On Moults and Alleged Colour-change in Birds. By Witmer Stone. The Ibis, April, 1901, pp. 177-183.

² Bird Portraits | By Ernest Seton-Thompson | With Descriptive Text | By Ralph Hoffmann | Boston | Ginn & Company | The Athenæum Press | 1901—4to, pp. 40, with 20 half-tone plates.