

Pittas, the Philepittas of Madagascar and the Xeniscidae of New Zealand, but in the South American Tyrannidae or Formicariidae we find just as much divergence in external characters among species which we feel sure must be closely allied.

At any rate we cannot think that Mr. Mathews is really serious in the statement quoted above, regarding the work and terminology of the anatomist, since in his succeeding pages he repeatedly calls for anatomical investigation of Australian birds and states that a description of the skeletons of the principal types of Muscicapidae would be "worth much more than any series of skins." This is the true scientific spirit and we can hardly think that he would do away with the characters proposed by the anatomist merely because the terminology is meaningless to the student of skins. There is, however, much food for thought in the matter that he has discussed.—W. S.

**McGregor's 'Index to the Genera of Birds.'**—In 1889 appeared a work entitled 'Index Generum Avium. A List of the Genera and Subgenera of Birds,' by F. H. Waterhouse, librarian to the Zoological Society of London. For over thirty years this has constituted an indispensable work of reference to all systematic ornithologists and in 1902, 1909 and 1917 Dr. C. W. Richmond published in the 'Proceedings of the U. S. National Museum,' three supplements to it, listing not only the generic names proposed for birds in the intervening years, but a list of names overlooked by Waterhouse and another list of names given by him which are not proposed as genera or apply to other groups than birds.

Mr. McGregor<sup>1</sup> has now given us another volume very similar in scope to that of Waterhouse but bringing the matter up to 1917. He does not base his catalogue upon Waterhouse's 'List' but begins de novo, cataloguing successively the generic names mentioned in Bonaparte's 'Conspectus' of 1850 and 1865; Gray's 'Hand-list,' 1869-1871; the 'Catalogue of Birds of the British Museum,' 1874-1895; Sharpe's 'Hand-list,' 1899-1909; DuBois's 'Systema Avium,' 1899-1904; and Richmond's three 'Supplements' to Waterhouse. The names thus compiled were then arranged in alphabetical order and under each is given the volume and page reference to all of the above works in which it may have been mentioned, the reference being printed in heavy-faced type if the name is recognized as valid, and in light-faced type if it is given as a synonym. The author of the name does not appear, nor does the original place of publication, but from the references cited the full history of the name can usually be ascertained and these matters looked up by the investigator. As Waterhouse usually only gave one reference, and that by no means always the original one, Mr. McGregor's plan really leads us directly or indirectly to much more information regarding the name which we are investigating than did the older work. Furthermore the brevity of his references enables him to print the names in three columns to the page

and makes it possible to include the whole 8839 names and some 24,000 references on 180 octavo pages.

A casual glance over the pages does not disclose any typographical errors and we have been able to find only one omission. The real test of course must come from actual use, but the general appearance of the list indicates a very careful piece of work.

A recent letter from the author states that his editorial duties seriously interfere with his ornithological research work, but if his time and opportunities permit only of the preparation of such valuable compilations as the one before us he need have no fear of being charged with neglecting his favorite science. Anyone who has had experience with the dreary monotony of compiling a list or index will fully appreciate the labor involved in Mr. McGregor's modest publication and will recognize the indebtedness that all those interested in systematic ornithology must feel toward him for his helpful work. McGregor's 'Index' will henceforth take the place of the familiar 'Waterhouse' and the fact that a publication of this sort bears the imprint of Manila is a tribute to the good judgment of those who direct the Philippine Bureau of Science.—W. S.

**Witherby's 'Handbook of British Birds.'**<sup>2</sup>—The appearance of a bulky double part 7-8, on April 8, completes the first volume of this admirable work. The birds treated cover the Thrushes and their allies, the Wrens, the Dippers and the Swallows, while two half-tone plates illustrate the juvenal plumages of the first of these families and a third depicts the several geographic races of the Wren and the Dipper.

The genus *Nannus* is regarded as not separable from *Troglodytes* and our American Winter Wren and Barn Swallow are regarded as subspecies of their European representatives instead of distinct species.

The work lives up to the high standard established by the first part and volume one is completed before the time set by the publishers, on both of which accomplishments they are to be congratulated.—W. S.

**Hartert's 'Die Vogel der palaarktischen Fauna.'**—The present part of Dr. Hartert's famous work covers the Ibises, Herons, Flamingos and Ducks and Geese. The treatment is the same as in the preceding parts and the same high standard is maintained. We notice in the nomenclature certain practices which differ from those of the A. O. U. 'Check-List.' The genera *Herodias* and *Egretta* for instance are united, as are also *Anas*, *Nettion*, *Querquedula*, *Chauleasmus*, *Mareca* and *Dafila*, while

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<sup>1</sup> Index to the Genera of Birds. By Richard C. McGregor. Manila, Bureau of Printing, 1920, pp. 1-185. (Dept. of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Publication 14, March 31, 1920.)

<sup>2</sup> A Practical Handbook of British Birds. Edited by H. F. Witherby. Parts 7-8, April 8, 1920. Price 4s. net per part. Witherby & Co., 326 High Holborn, W. C. I.