

Tapacolas, Gnat-eaters and Ant-birds (Pteroptochidae, Conopophagidae and Formicariidae), was left in an advanced stage of preparation at the time of Cory's death, but the large amount of work done on neotropical birds since that time, together with the notes and information possessed by Mr. Hellmayr and not accessible to Mr. Cory, have necessitated a complete revision of the manuscript, and although conforming to the style and typography of the preceding part, all responsibility for detail and authority for the new forms proposed rests upon Dr. Hellmayr. All of which information we gather from the preface by Dr. W. H. Osgood, Curator of the Department of Zoölogy of the museum. The volume is a most welcome one to all systematic workers on the avifauna of South America as the families of which it treats are among the most difficult to deal with, and such information as we have had regarding the relationship of the species and genera has been widely scattered. Dr. Hellmayr's familiarity with the collections in Europe and his copious notes on specimens contained therein, have been invaluable in making this volume of the 'Catalogue' as nearly perfect as our present knowledge of the subject permits.

Dr. Hellmayr deserves the greatest credit for the care which he has exercised in the preparation of the manuscript, while the numerous extended footnotes over his own initials contain helpful descriptions and information of the greatest importance. The new forms described in this Part are listed on p. vii and comprise *Scytalopus latrans*, four subspecies of *Thamnophilus*, one each of *Melanopareia*, *Sclateria* and *Phaenostictus* and a new genus *Sipia* (p. 224) for *Pyriglena berlepschi* Hartert.

Comparing Dr. Hellmayr's arrangement with that of Mr. Ridgway in Part V of his 'Birds of North and Middle America' we find considerable difference, and a number of the genera proposed or recognized by the latter author are placed in synonymy by Hellmayr as for instance *Abalius*, *Erionotus*, *Myrmopagis*, *Lochites*, *Rhopochares*, *Rhopias*, *Hypsibemon*, *Oropezus* and *Hylopezus*. Such radical difference of opinion on the part of two of the best authorities is a good illustration of the extent to which generic subdivision is based upon individual opinion, and the useless confusion that is perpetrated in nomenclature by too radical action in the creation of "new genera."

It is to be regretted that Dr. Hellmayr did not explain more fully his reasons for certain nomenclatural rulings, as the apparent refusal to adopt any of Reichenbach's genera, published in his 'Avium Systema Naturale' in connection with plates but without diagnosis. Such names have always been accepted by Mr. Ridgway.

However, this is a small matter as compared with the careful consideration given to ornithological questions. We wish Dr. Hellmayr all speed in the completion of his task.—W. S.

**Kirke Swann's 'Monograph of the Birds of Prey.'**<sup>1</sup>—Having gone

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<sup>1</sup> A | Monograph | of the | Birds of Prey | (Order Accipitres) | by | H. Kirke Swann, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. | Corresponding Fellow of the Amer. Orn. Union.

thoroughly over the systematic study of the birds of prey in preparing the two editions of his 'Synopsis of the Accipitres' Mr. Kirke Swann is now engaged upon an elaborate 'Monograph' of the group, the first part of which is before us.

The work is a handsomely printed quarto, illustrated by colored plates and photogravures, the former from paintings by Grönvold and the latter from photographs. No attempt is made to figure all of the species and in the present part while fifteen species and eleven additional subspecies of Vultures are considered in the text, only the Condor, two forms of Caracaras and two of Griffon Vultures appear on the plates. There is however a plate of eggs of various species and a photographic study of a Griffon Vulture's nest. Grönvold's paintings, while exceedingly accurate in detail, do not have the life and action displayed in the work of some of the other leading bird artists, but those of the present part are among his best and fully meet the needs of the work, while the reproduction is beautifully done.

The text of Part I includes an introduction covering the general characters and arrangement of the Accipitres with a table showing the distribution of the 100 genera in the eight great zoogeographic regions and the number of forms in each. There is also an account of the history of falconry and a list of the species employed in this ancient art, which includes over twenty forms.

The systematic treatment follows, beginning with the Sarcoramphidae or New World Vultures. The synonymy and distributional statements are very complete and the descriptions, covering as they do adults of both sexes and young, are entirely satisfactory. The main text includes condensed accounts of the habits and food of each form with brief quotations from several authors who have studied the species in its native haunts—the whole averaging two pages to each species or subspecies.

The problem of how to treat the several subspecies of a given species has been met by Mr. Swann by printing the first race in large type with a serial number and the others in smaller type designated by letters. This unfortunately will always give the impression of undue importance to the first race and subordinate rank to the others, whereas they are simply several forms of the same species, all being of equal rank. This, however, is a minor point in an admirable work. The nomenclature is fully up to date and we note that on the advice of Dr. Alexander Wetmore, whose aid is acknowledged in several places, the Pondicherry Vulture is accorded generic distinction from the Sociable Vulture, which was not done in the 'Synopsis' nor in the introduction to the present work.

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Illustrated by Plates reproduced in colour from drawings made expressly for this work by H. Grönvold, also Coloured Plates of Eggs, and Photogravure Plates. London | Wheldon & Wesley, Ltd. | 2, 3 & 4, Arthur Street, New Oxford Street, W. C. 2 | Part I. November 15th, 1924. Price 26s. net. Pp. 1-xi+1-52 and five plates, unnumbered. To be completed in 12 parts. Edition limited to 412 copies and will not be reprinted.

On the whole the 'Monograph' lives well up to its title and gives us in concise form a summary of the present day knowledge of this noble group of birds, which, until Mr. Swann took up the work, was sadly in need of a revision. We congratulate him upon the high standard which he has set both in the character of text and plates and in typographical appearance.—W. S.

**Abel Chapman's 'The Borders and Beyond.'**—In this volume<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chapman returns for the most part to his early interests and to the subject of his first book, 'Bird-Life of the Borders,' which, by the way refers to the borderland between England and Scotland, a fact not perhaps generally understood on this side of the Atlantic. Eight chapters deal with "salmonology" and one is devoted to the otter but the bulk of the volume relates to birds, especially to the Red Grouse and the Shore-birds, with other chapters on Water-fowl, the Raven, the sense of smell in birds, modern zoölogy, nomenclature and trinomialism.

Much space is given to demonstrate that the Red Grouse feeds only in the evening, while in connection with the transient shore-birds our author sets down seven salient points which he considers proven by his observations: (1) that in many species some individuals go far south to winter, while others remain in the British Isles, the latter starting north in March and the former in mid-May; (2) that the Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, Turnstone, Oystercatcher and Bar-tailed Godwit require two, three, possibly four years to acquire their full adult plumage, and during this prolonged adolescence do not breed; (3) that other species attain maturity and breed the first year—Black-tailed Godwit, Golden Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Little and Temmink's Stints; (4) that the immature birds accompany the adults only so far and no farther in the spring migration, apparently dropping out somewhere between Great Britain and the Arctic Circle; (5) that the successive plumages of the long adolescence have never hitherto been correctly diagnosed; (6) that the scope and range of migration is wider and more complex than popularly accepted and that the routes vary according to age and season; (7) that the calendar of the arctic differs from that of Great Britain by a quarter of the year and this fact should be considered in framing faunal game legislation.

We look in vain for some account of how the age of the birds discussed and figured was determined but find only such statements as: "obviously the display in *mid-May* of every phase of plumage bespeaks in the Sanderling a prolonged maturity;" while the data upon which the author's remarks upon migration are based are equally unsatisfactory. Mr. Chap-

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<sup>1</sup>The Borders and Beyond. Arctic—Cheviot—Tropic. "Where'er the billows roll, from the world's girdle to the frozen Pole." By Abel Chapman, M. A., author of *Bird Life of the Borders*, and of *Works on Spain, Norway, British East Africa, and the Soudan*. With nineteen coloured plates by W. H. Riddell and 170 sketches by the author, maps, diagrams, etc. Gurney and Jackson, London: 33 Paternoster Row, Edinburgh: Tweeddale Court. 1924. pp. i-xxi, 1-489, large 8vo. Price 25 shillings net.