

of any part of the United States in the new sequence. After forty years of the old classification it seems strange to find the Thrushes in the middle of the Passeres and the Finches at the end while the Birds of Prey are in between the Ducks and the Gallinaceous species, but this is the sequence that we shall all have to accustom ourselves to for some time to come and the sooner we learn it the better. Some of us began years ago with the Birds of Prey at the top of the list and then for a time were accustomed to beginning instead of ending with the Thrushes and have found little trouble in making the changes.

Mr. Hoffman has, we consider, produced an admirable work, one of the best field books, in fact, that has yet appeared.

So much for the text but the illustrations demand separate consideration they are all by Major Allan Brooks and comprise ten plates in color and 200 line drawings in the text. They show Major Brooks at his best. The colored plates are beautifully delicate paintings—notably those of the Phalaropes and Hummingbirds, but some of them seem to have received too much red in the printing. The line drawings are especially notable for the originality of posing and as we turn the pages it is a constant delight to see a familiar bird in a characteristic position not usually portrayed by an artist. This is particularly the case in the number of species drawn in flight. Usually we find only the Gulls, Terns, Hummers, and Swallows so drawn, but here we see the Loon, Cormorant, Shrike, Magpie, most of the Hawks, Woodpeckers, etc., on the wing.

Both Mr. Hoffman and Major Brooks are to be congratulated upon their work which will be in great demand by residents and visitors interested in learning from personal observation something of the bird life of the Coast.—W. S.

Grinnell and Wythe on Bird Life of the San Francisco Bay Region.—Dr. Grinnell and Miss Wythe have compiled a work on the Bird Life of the San Francisco Bay Region¹ that is rather different from anything in the way of a local list that has yet appeared. In fact the authors have termed it a "directory" and their object in its preparation has been to provide help and incentive toward an increased knowledge of the bird life of the region covered and to furnish an accumulation of facts and citations likely to prove useful to the student of the living bird.

The publication seems to realize the intention of its authors admirably. Not only is there a bibliography arranged according to counties and towns but under each species is a statement of the character of its occurrence with lists of localities where it has been found, also information regarding its nesting, migration dates and references to the most important publi-

¹ Directory to the Bird-Life of the San Francisco Bay Region. By Joseph Grinnell and Margaret W. Wythe. Cooper Ornithological Club, Pacific Coast Avifauna Number 18. Berkeley, California. Published by the Club March 29, 1927. pp. 1-160. Price \$4.00. W. Lee Chambers, Drawer 123, Eagle Rock, Los Angeles, Calif.

cations relating to it. The obvious result is to equip the earnest student with the most important facts regarding the bird so far accumulated, in the shortest possible time, so as to enable him to go on and add to our knowledge instead of spending years in acquiring this information by personal observation. It has always struck us that the saddest thing about the acquirement of knowledge was the impossibility of any individual passing on to his successors more than a fraction of what he has accumulated and if Dr. Grinnell's plan will remedy this condition, as it doubtless will, it is very well worth while.

There is but one criticism that we have to make of the work and that is the camouflaging of familiar birds under a host of new names—"common names" in this instance, and often only lengthened or modified, yet all sufficient, we fear, to confuse the very persons who are expected to benefit by the work.

Apparently the idea is to have the English names parallel the Latin ones so far as possible and make them into a trinomial whenever the latter name takes that form, as for instance, "Slender-billed White-breasted Nuthatch," but everyone knows the bird as "Slender-billed Nuthatch," and all the literature for years back is under that name. Furthermore the field student, so far as our experience goes, does not care whether it is a subspecies of the White-breasted Nuthatch or not. Moreover he will wonder why the California Cowbird and the Nevada Cowbird escaped trinomialism and whether they are somehow full species and why the California Purple Finch was not shortened to a binomial to match its Latin equivalent. If we have to rely on the Latin names to answer these questions why not let them explain *relationship* in all cases and leave the English names, our only hope of stability, alone. Already we have a query from an oölogist, a group who very properly use only English names in their business, as to whether Dr. Grinnell has made a new race of the Black-throated Blue Warbler that breeds in Canada since he lists an apparently new bird as the "Canadian Black-throated Blue Warbler!"

It is impossible to make a consistent system of "common" names and in any attempt they immediately become book names and are no longer "common." Surely one set of names built up on a system is enough so let our vernacular names be monosyllables or sesquipedalian but stick to them, and where we have none adopt one book name which may eventually become a vernacular.

We know that Dr. Grinnell was most sincere in his effort and intention but we fear that he has to some extent defeated his object by his innovations. Others have tried similar schemes but apparently the new names have never become current and we cannot imagine such cumbersome names ever being generally adopted.

For every other feature of the "Directory" we have the highest praise.—
W. S.

Mailliard on the Birds of Modoc Co., California.—A preliminary