

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## Songs of Field and Savannah Sparrows.

Editor of 'The Auk':

Mr. Mousley ('Auk,' xlv, 1927, p. 523) includes the Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla pusilla*) in his list of the birds of Hatley, Quebec, on the strength of a list of species observed at Sherbrooke by Mr. R. G. Price, printed in 'The Ottawa Naturalist,' XXIV, 1910, 55-57, supplemented by a letter from Mr. Price. In a locality where the Indigo Bunting is found one need not be surprised to find the Field Sparrow also, but a careful consideration of the evidence given of its actual occurrence in the Hatley-Sherbrooke region is not convincing. Mr. Price's rendering of the song of his 'Field Sparrows' as "sit-sit-sit and s-i-n-g f-r-e-e," resembling as it does so closely Dr. Dwight's *tsip-tsip-tsip' sē'-ē-ē-s'r-r-r* in Chapman's Handbook, strikes me as a particularly happy rendering of the Savannah Sparrow's song, while I cannot see in it the slightest suggestion of the Field Sparrow's. It is significant, too, that Mr. Price says that the song "is usually delivered from the top of a fence post or some low object"—very characteristic of the Savannah Sparrow but not of the Field Sparrow, which usually chooses a higher perch. Still more significant is the fact that though the Savannah Sparrow is "fairly common" at Hatley, it is entirely omitted from Mr. Price's Sherbrooke list. Of course the Savannah Sparrow is much more a field Sparrow than *Spizella pusilla*, and it is not surprising that Mr. Price, who includes the "Jenny Wren" in his list, should know it by that name. Even so good an observer as Thoreau was deceived by a mere name when he called the Pileated Woodpecker of the Maine woods the Red-headed Woodpecker, adding the scientific name *Picus erythrocephalus*. Mr. Mousley may not be the first author to accept Mr. Price's 'Field Sparrows' at their face value, and, as it is always hard to overtake a false record, he may not be the last; so that we can only hope that he will himself soon find an undoubted Field Sparrow at Hatley and thus establish the presence there of a species that pretty surely does not as yet deserve a place in his list.

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## Correction of Error.

Editor of 'The Auk':

In Volume XLIV, p. 589 of 'The Auk' in mentioning the contents of the 'Journal für Ornithologie' the heading of some controversies between Dr. Stresemann and myself has been translated "The breaking down of our conception of a species." This translation, I am sorry to say, is incorrect and misleading. The heading was "Grenzfälle des Artbegriffes"