

another genus in the same kingdom, in the case of a generic name, or to another species in the same genus, in the case of a specific name. But a name may have gained a currency to which it is not entitled, in consequence of an earlier name having been overlooked, owing to obscurity of publication or other causes. As fixity of names is the prime desideratum in our nomenclature, we must not only have fixed rules for determining the tenability of names, but must adhere to them inflexibly, otherwise the shuffling of names would never cease.

Just at the present time 'The Auk' is bristling with these technicalities of nomenclature, which so naturally disgust the lay mind. And why? Simply because the 'closet' or 'museum' ornithologists of this country wish to settle at once, and if possible forever, as regards North American birds, these vexed questions of synonymy, in view of the proposed new A. O. U. List of North American Birds. The end in view is not the upsetting of names for the mere sake of upsetting them, or for any personal ends or ambitions, but simply and purely to secure a stable foundation for the future. We are simply repairing our tools and setting in order the great North American ornithological household.

We are quite aware that a considerable number of our readers share the 'lay view' of the case, as presented by our correspondent, and we even sympathise with them in their disgust, but beg to assure them that it is just such discussions of abstract and dry details of nomenclature that advance, in a certain necessary way, the *science* of ornithology; although nomenclature is not in itself science, but merely one of the indispensable tools of science.—J. A. A.]

NOTES AND NEWS.

SOME weeks since we received Heft I of the new quarterly journal of ornithology—'Zeitschrift für die gesammte Ornithologie'—published at Budapest, and edited by Dr. Julius von Madarász. It is large octavo in form, and the present number consists of 74 pages and two colored plates. The articles are mainly written in German, but there are also several papers in Hungarian and one in English. The matter relates mainly to Hungarian ornithology, but contains a paper of eight pages by Dr. L. Stejneger on the Wrens of the subgenus *Anorthura*, which we shall notice more fully later. Dr. E. F. von Homeyer, in a short opening article, proposes to cut the 'gordian knot' of nomenclature by the general adoption of a rule providing that specific names which have been in general use for a considerable period—say twenty years—shall not be subject to alteration; but we fear the practical difficulties of such a scheme have not been carefully weighed by the suggester of this supposed easy way out of the difficulty.

The editor, in his preface, states that the 'Zeitschrift' will be devoted especially to Hungarian ornithology, and to an exposition of the ornithological riches of the National Museum at Budapest. The colored illustrations, of which there are to be not less than two in each number, will give figures of hitherto unfigured species, even if not recently described.

—WE have received specimen pages of a work now in press entitled 'Our Birds in their Haunts,' by the Rev. J. H. Langille. The work — an octavo of about 560 pages — will be published by S. E. Cassino & Co., of Boston, and will contain a popular account of all the species of common occurrence east of the Mississippi River.

—Two numbers of a monthly 'Bulletin of Massachusetts Natural History,' published by W. A. Stearns, Amherst, Mass., have appeared. It is only to a small extent ornithological, and, judging by the opening numbers, will not take a high stand, weighed from either a literary or scientific standpoint.

—MR. S. H. Scudder has placed zoölogists under a lasting debt of gratitude by the publication of his 'Universal Index to Genera in Zoölogy,' which has just appeared. It is scarcely within the range of possibility that such a work should be faultless, or that its 80,000 names should include all the names that should be found in it. At present it is a list of the names given by Agassiz and Marschall in their 'Nomenclators,' by Mr. Scudder himself in his 'Supplemental List,' and in the 'Zoölogical Record' down to 1879. Dr. Stejneger, on a preceding page of this number of 'The Auk,' alludes pointedly to its incompleteness for ornithology. But probably no one is more keenly aware of its imperfections than the author himself, who, in the preface to his 'Supplemental List,' published in 1882, says: "That the list is far from being fully complementary, the compiler has had ample proofs since the completion of the appendix. When, indeed, such common generic names as *Homo* and *Musca* have escaped entry until now, he cannot anticipate that he has been much more successful than his predecessors." As the Smithsonian Institution, by whom the work is published, propose hereafter to issue decennial supplements to this list, and as the author appeals to zoölogists for information concerning names omitted from the 'Universal Index,' that they may be included in the contemplated supplements, we trust that, in the interest of zoölogy at large, he will meet with such hearty coöperation that the first supplement will go far toward making the 'Index' thoroughly complete. A collation of several pages of the index to generic names given in Gray's 'Hand-list of Birds,' published in 1871, with the present 'Index' shows that from 25 to 30 per cent. of even the names given by Gray (this does not include orthographical variations of the same name) do not appear in the 'Universal Index.'

—We regret to announce that the publication of the 'Quarterly Journal of the Boston Zoölogical Society' has been suspended.

— VOLUME I of the 'Water Birds of North America,' by Baird, Brewer, and Ridgway, has already appeared, and Volume II, completing this valuable work, will be published in September. The first volume, beginning with the Herons, carries the subject through the Herodiones, Limicolæ, Alectorides, and Phœnicopteri, and into the Anseres as far as the genus *Querquedula*, and contains 537 pages, 135 illustrations of heads, and 68 full-length figures. It is issued in two editions, the one with the figures plain, the other with the figures hand-colored. Little, Brown & Co., Boston, are the publishers.

— AT the last meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, held in Washington, April 15-18, Dr. Coues addressed the Academy in scientific session on the application of trinomial nomenclature to zoölogy, basing his remarks upon the uniform practise of American ornithologists in this matter, and arguing for the expediency of the general adoption of trinomials in zoölogy upon the definite principles already recognized and acted upon by the 'American School' of ornithologists. Dr. Coues also introduced a resolution in business meeting of the Academy, that a committee be appointed to consider the subject of zoölogical nomenclature, with reference to the establishment of a more uniform system. The resolution was seconded by Professor Gill, and referred to the Council of the Academy, whose action will be awaited with interest by all our ornithologists.

— WE have received from A. Bogardus & Co., New York, a panel photograph, ten inches by twelve, of the founders and officers of the A. O. U. The group as a whole is very satisfactory, most of the figures being excellent.

— DR. Elliott Coues sailed for England on May 24, where he will spend several months, partly for purposes of research and partly for recreation.

— WILSON Flagg, well-known as the genial author of 'The Birds and Seasons of New England,' 'The Field and Forest,' 'The Woods and By-Ways of New England,' etc., and a keen and appreciative observer of nature, died in Cambridge, Mass., May 5, in his eightieth year, after a long and painful illness. Mr. Flagg received his education at the Andover Phillips Academy and Harvard College, and for many years was an occasional contributor to the 'Atlantic' and other magazines, where his essays on natural history subjects, afterwards gathered in the books above-named, originally appeared.

— EDGAR A. Small, of Hagarstown, Md., an Associate Member of the A. O. U., died at that place April 24, 1884, in the twentieth year of his age. Mr. Small, although for some years a sufferer from spinal disease, resulting from an accident, was widely known as a young ornithologist of much promise.

— HENRY G. Vennor, of Montreal, died in that city June 8, 1884, at the age of 44. Mr. Vennor was an Associate Member of the A. O. U., and well-known as one of the leading ornithologists of Canada. Besides various

minor papers on the birds of Canada, he published in 1880 a work in quarto, with photographic illustrations, entitled 'Our Birds of Prey.' From 1865 to 1880 Mr. Vennor was an assistant on the Canadian Geological Survey. He also took great interest in meteorology, and through his weather predictions acquired no little celebrity as 'the weather prophet.'

—MR. J. W. Johnson, of Cleveland, Ohio, has started for Alaska to take charge of the Signal Service Station at Bristol Bay (Nushagak), and make collections of natural history for the National Museum.

—THE officers of the vessels of the Greeley Relief Expedition have been furnished by Professor Baird with colored drawings of the Knot (*Tringa canutus*), and a request to look out for the eggs of this species, which are still unknown.

—CAPT. Charles E. Bendire, U. S. A., has presented his magnificent collection of North American birds' eggs to the National Museum. Embracing as it does extensive suites of the eggs of many of the rarer species, to say nothing of the more common ones, and being especially rich as regards the birds of the Far West, it greatly surpasses any other collection of North American birds' eggs yet brought together, and in point of neatness and care of preparation is doubtless unequalled. Capt. Bendire has been for some time personally superintending their arrangement at the National Museum.

—THE Fish Commission steamer 'Albatross' has returned from her cruise among the islands of the Caribbean Sea and northern coast of South America. A small but very interesting collection of birds was made by Messrs. J. E. Benedict and W. Nye, embracing several new species, from islands not previously visited by a naturalist or collector. Two fine examples of the Guachera Bird (*Steatornis caripensis*), from Mona Island, were also secured. A report on this collection will be published in the 'Proceedings' of the National Museum.

—THE A. O. U. Committee on Migration of Birds has now over 650 observers, of which 100 are in Canada. This number is additional to the large number of light-house keepers, also engaged in the work of observation.

—AT the April meeting of the Ridgway Ornithological Club of Chicago a paper by Dr. W. J. Hoffman, of the Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, D. C., on Indian bird names, was read, and also a paper by Mr. H. K. Coale, on the migration of birds in the vicinity of Chicago in the spring of 1883. Albino specimens of Wilson's Snipe and the Cowbird, recently collected in Illinois, were exhibited by Mr. Toppan. At the meeting held June 5, the society was reorganized under its new charter as an incorporated body, and the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, B. T. Gault; Vice President and Treasurer, Geo. Frean Morcom; Secretary, H. K. Coale; Curator, Joseph L. Hancock; Librarian, Frank L. Rice. Mr. Coale read a paper on the Blue Mountain Parrot of Australia, exhibiting specimens of the birds and a set of eggs laid in captivity.

—THE First International Congress of Ornithologists was held in Vienna, April 7-11, under the patronage of the Crown Prince, Rudolf. Among the 135 ornithologists present were delegates from nearly all the nationalities of Europe, including a large number of ornithologists of world-wide reputation. But there were no delegates from England or the United States. The Congress organized in three sections, which held simultaneous sessions. Section I considered the subject of international bird-protection legislation. After long deliberation the section voted to recommend the adoption by all nations of (1) a law forbidding the destruction of birds otherwise than by shooting, and then only with legal permission, during the first half of the calendar year, and (2) the wholesale slaughter of birds at all times. Section II had under consideration the subject of the origin of domesticated birds, and also improvement in methods of bird-rearing, and made various recommendations in reference to these objects. Section III devoted itself to the elaboration of a scheme for the establishment of coöperative bird observation stations throughout the world. Various recommendations were adopted in regard to the details of the plan, and an International Committee was appointed to facilitate the work. This committee was constituted as follows: Russia, Dr. L. von Schrenck, Dr. G. Radde, Dr. J. A. Palmén, and Dr. Bogdanow; Austro-Hungary, Count V. von Tschusi, Dr. J. von Madarász, and Dr. Brusina; Germany, Dr. E. F. von Homeyer, Dr. A. B. Meyer, and Dr. R. Blasius; France, Dr. Oustalet and Prof. A. Milne-Edwards; Italy, Dr. H. H. Giglioli, and Prof. T. Salvadori; Switzerland, Dr. V. Fatio and Dr. Girtanner; Norway, Dr. R. Collett; Sweden, Count Thott; Denmark, Prof. C. Lütken; Belgium, Baron de Selys-Longchamps and Dr. A. Dubois; Holland, Dr. F. Pollen; Portugal, Dr. Barboza du Boccage; Greece, Dr. Kriüper; Servia, Dr. Dokic; Japan, Capt. Blackiston; England, Messrs. Harvie-Brown, Cordeaux, and Kermode; Australia, Dr. E. P. Ramsay; New Zealand, Dr. W. L. Buller; British India, Dr. Anderson and Da Cunha; Java, Dr. Vordermann; Brazil, Baron Carvalho Borges; Chili, Prof. R. A. Philippi; Argentine Republic, Dr. H. Burmeister and Dr. Berg; United States of North America, Dr. C. Hart Merriam and Dr. Elliott Coues.

At the same time was held a General Ornithological Exhibition, embracing upward of 1600 entries, including a rich selection of common fowls, Ducks, Geese, Pigeons and ornamental birds, native Song-birds, exotic birds, and wading and swimming birds. There were also shown many very interesting bird-skins and stuffed birds. The exhibition also included ornithological literature. Special mention is made in the report of the Congress, of two very interesting manuscript maps, prepared by Dr. Reichenow, showing the distribution of single families, genera, and species of birds over the whole world.

Social intercourse and festivities added greatly to the enjoyment of the occasion; and the delegates separated in the hope that the next International Ornithological Congress, to be held at Luzern, Switzerland, in 1877, would prove as satisfactory as had the one just held at Vienna.