

cultivated fields in enormous flocks. Their flight is much like that of other representatives of the family and not, so far as I could judge, appreciably faster. The difficulty in procuring specimens arises from their habitually very *high* flight. I was unable to learn anything with regard to the time or place of their breeding.

143. *Mellisuga minima* (*Linn.*). VERVAIN HUMMINGBIRD.—Common resident at all points visited on the island, particularly in the vicinity of Kingston. It was noticed daily at Stony Hill, and often seen at Boston, though not so commonly as at other points. This seems to be more a species of the open country than either of the others found on the island, and also more fond of low-growing flowering plants. In habits it is much like our *Trochilus colubris*. Gosse has given a very detailed account of its breeding habits (*Birds of Jamaica*, pp. 130-134).

145. *Aithurus polytmus* (*Linn.*). LONG-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD; DOCTOR-BIRD.—The commonest Hummingbird of the island; very abundant and generally distributed, though perhaps preferring the region 1000 feet in altitude above the sea.

This is one of the species so carefully and fully studied and written of by the late Philip Henry Gosse, that the reader is referred directly to that author (*Birds of Jamaica*, pp. 97-127).

In the series collected I have specimens of male birds whose two long outside tail feathers are 7.90 inches in length.

146. *Lampornis mango* (*Linn.*). MANGO HUMMINGBIRD; DOCTOR-BIRD.—Not so common as either of the other two. At Stony Hill where these birds were commoner than at any other points visited, they seemed particularly to like the flowers of the banana. At Boston, Priestman's River, and Port Antonio I saw this bird on only a few occasions. At Boston during two months but two birds were obtained. I was unable to learn anything of its breeding habits.

(*To be continued.*)

RECENT LITERATURE.

Salvadori's Catalogue of the Parrots.*—While doubtless Professor Salvadori has had before him for examination the largest collection of Parrots existing in any museum, he considers this material inadequate "for affording a solid base to a general classification of Parrots, or fully illustrating the different stages of many of the species." the deficiencies relating more

* Catalogue of the Psittaci, or Parrots, in the Collection of the British Museum. By T. Salvadori. London: Printed by order of the Trustees. . . . [= 6 lines, names of booksellers] 1891.—8vo, pp. xvii, 658, and pl. 18.—Forming Vol. XX of the Catalogue of the Birds of the British Museum.

especially to the African, the Austro-Malayan and the Australian series. The number of specimens contained in the British Museum is given as 5113, belonging to 450 species, whilst 49 are not represented in the Museum, so that the total number of species admitted in the present Catalogue is 499, of which 13 are now described for the first time." He also records in footnotes 14 species and subspecies which he was unable to identify, quoting in each case the original description. In an appendix are also treated 56 "doubtful species" of Parrots.

Respecting the classification of the Psittaci, he says: "It is well known to ornithologists that the classification of the Parrots has been a very difficult problem; and I am sorry to say that I cannot offer results that will settle the question." He divides the group into six families, as follows: Nestoridae, Loriidae, Cyclopsittacidae, Cacatuidae, Psittacidae, and Strigopidae. The number of genera recognized is 79, of which 55 belong to the single family Psittacidae. As usual in these volumes generic diagnoses are omitted, beyond the few differential points noted in the 'Keys to the Genera' under the several families and subfamilies. While the general style of the volume, as regards method of treatment, is similar to that of the preceding volumes of the series, the author is much less conservative than most of his predecessors in his treatment of both genera and species,—by no means a fault, if we take certain of the earlier volumes as a standard for comparison. Dr. Finsch, in his well-known monograph, 'Die Papageien,' published in 1868, recognized 351 species, to which he added a list of 41 he was unable to identify. These he classified in one family, divided into five subfamilies and 26 genera. Dr. Reichenow, in 1882, in his 'Conspectus Psittacorum,' recognized 444 species, which he placed in nine families and 44 genera, with, in addition, 27 subgenera. These are instructive figures, showing the drift of modern ornithological research, since the work under review is not exceptional as regards increase in the number of forms now currently recognized as compared with the number admitted one or two decades ago. The change is due largely to the great increase of material, gathered in part from previously little-known regions.

Among the new genera may be noted *Conuropsis*, with the Carolina Parrotquet as the type and only species.

By what reason *Amazona* Lesson, 1831, is rejected for *Chrysotis* Swain., 1837, is not clear, since on the evidence, as shown by Salvadori himself, there is apparently no reason, unless it be the fact that *Amazona* was called by Lesson a "sous-genre," although he used it in the sense of a genus, the species being called by him "*Amazona pulverulenta*," "*Amazona icterocephala*," etc. To reject it on this ground is not in accordance with either modern usage or current nomenclatural rules. Neither is it in accordance with our author's own practice in other cases, since he accepts (p. 421) Lesson's 'sous-genre' *Mascarinus* without protest, although occurring on the same page as *Amazona* and used in the same way.

While our author is willing to take Kuhl's "Sectio II, *Conurus*," as a

genus he rejects Kuhl's "Sectio VI, *Probosciger*," which has just the same status, "because *Probosciger* is not a generic name, but a term used by Kuhl for his sect. vi, of the genus *Psittacus*"! (p. 102). In seeking a substitute for *Probosciger* he passes over *Solenoglossus* Ranz, 1821, for *Microglossus* Vieill., 1821-23, after admitting the former has priority, because *Solenoglossus* "conveys quite a false idea of the structure of the tongue"!

Micropsitta Lesson, 1831, and *Nasiterna* Wagler, 1832, is a case parallel with *Amazona* and *Chrysotis*, where for no good reason a later name is taken for an earlier. *Ognorhynchus* Bon., 1857, clearly has priority over *Gnathosittaca* Cab., 1864, even if the former be taken from Gray, as used for a subgenus in 1859.

As our author adheres to the principle that erroneously constructed names should be corrected, it is not surprising that he should reject names that, in his opinion, are too barbarous to be tolerated, as for example, *Psittrichas* Lesson, *Graydidascalus* Bon., etc.

In palliation it should be said that the practices here criticized are not innovations; his nomenclatural usages in the present work are in the main consistent not only with those of his former works, but with those of many other veterans of the science; and it is perhaps too soon to expect any great swerving from long established methods, out of deference to a set of new-fangled rules recently adopted by a large number of ornithologists in behalf of stability of nomenclature. Aside from a few faults of nomenclature (as we view the case), the work is entitled to the highest approbation, and must win for its renowned author the deep gratitude of systematic ornithologists everywhere.—J. A. A.

Mrs. Miller's 'Little Brothers of the Air.'*—The frequent appearance nowadays of books and magazine articles on natural history is undeniable evidence of a growing class of readers who in these smaller volumes approach that larger book to which the eyes of the world are gradually opening. We wish we might accord to all these aids the hearty welcome Mrs. Miller's latest book deserves. But alas! natural history 'copy readers' are as yet an unknown adjunct of publishing houses. If they were we should be spared some of the unwitting mistakes or deliberate falsehoods which unchallenged pass their presses. After reading recently in a leading monthly that there are ten thousand species of water-birds, or learning from a book issued by one of our large educational publishing firms, that the Grebe paddles its nest to safety by stretching one leg over the edge, it is a relief to take up a popular work based on original, accurate, painstaking observation. Mrs. Miller is an enthusiast. Her patience is untiring, and her reward is not a 'skin,' or a 'full-clutch,' but a new fact in the life, if not of the species, at least of the individual bird she

* Little Brothers of the Air | By | Olive Thorne Miller | [seal and motto] | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin and Company | The Riverside Press, Cambridge | 1892. 12°, pp. vii, 271.