

the correction of past errors. As Prof. Miller, who has of course due regard for philological proprieties, well says: "We may recognize the law of priority as absolute, and retain the many monstrous and misspelled names to be found on the records of natural history, just as their makers left them. They are historic facts and serve to mark the group of animals or plants to which they apply, but these misshapen forms of words are not ornamental and they are unworthy of scholars. It is to be hoped that, in future, greater care may be taken to make words that give correctly the idea the author may have intended. . . . It costs no more to frame a name properly than to leave it a monstrosity."—J. A. A.

Chapman's Notes on Birds Observed in Yucatan.¹—In the present paper Mr. Chapman gives the ornithological results of his short excursion to Yucatan, where, in March, 1896, he spent about three weeks at Chichen-Itza in the study of bird-life. Seventy-four species were observed, a list of which, together with critical notes and remarks on habits, are here given, preceded by a short sketch of the physical features of the region and the derivation of its avifauna.

A new genus, *Agriocharis* (p. 288), is created for the reception of the Ocellated Turkey; and an attempt is made to prove the Guatemalan Green Jay specifically distinct from the Rio Grande bird. With the latter we are unable to agree.

A very useful list of the principal contributions to Yucatan birds concludes the paper. — C. W. R.

'**Upon the Tree-Tops.**'²—Students of birds out of doors will welcome a new volume by Mrs. Miller. Her enthusiastic and careful observations of the home-life of birds have not only added to our knowledge of the habits of species whose ways we supposed were well known, but they have shown how much there is in bird-life to interest every stroller in the woods and fields. It is the human-like nature of birds that appeals to Mrs. Miller and in writing from this point of view she brings birds nearer to us and arouses a sympathetic interest in them even among readers to whom her feathered friends are strangers.

In the present volume we have accounts of the Loggerhead Shrike, Winter Wren, Yellow-breasted Chat, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and more or less extended observations on numerous other birds in chapters entitled, 'Tramps with an Enthusiast,' 'Young America in Feathers,' 'Down the Meadow,' 'In a Colorado Nook,' and 'The Idyl of an Empty

¹Notes on Birds observed in Yucatan. By Frank M. Chapman. Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, VIII, pp. 271-290, Dec. 11, 1896.

²Upon the Tree-Tops. By Olive Thorne Miller. Illustrated by J. Carter Beard. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1897. 16mo, pp. ix + 245, pll. x.

Lot.' Unfortunately the locality at which these notes were made is in some instances given in only a general way, while in others it is wholly omitted.

The two concluding chapters are written from the 'Bird-Room' and give detailed studies of the Clarin (*Myiadestes unicolor*, not *M. obscurus*, the latter being known as the Jilguero) and Orchard Oriole in confinement.

It is difficult to overestimate the value of books of this class. They reach an audience to whom the ordinary 'bird-book' is unknown and we feel assured that the present greatly increased desire for information about our birds is largely due to the influence of just such books as Mrs. Miller's. — F. M. C. .

The Sharp-tailed Sparrows of Maine.¹—Mr. Norton records the breeding of *Ammodramus caudacutus subvirgatus* in 'fair' numbers at Small Point, Sagadahoc County, the first time this race has been discovered nesting in the State. In discussing the relationship of our three forms of Sharp-tailed Finches it is very pertinently suggested that as typical *Ammodramus caudacutus* is known to breed at Scarboro', only some thirty miles west of Small Point, it is quite probable that *subvirgatus* and its western representative *nelsoni* are specifically distinct from *caudacutus* and should therefore stand as *Ammodramus nelsoni* and *Ammodramus nelsoni subvirgatus*. — F. M. C.

The Story of the Farallones.²—In an attractive little booklet of thirty-two pages Mr. Barlow gives an interesting sketch of the Farallones and their bird-life. Numerous half-tone reproductions of photographs afford an excellent idea of the topography of the islands, the dangers of 'egging,' and the nests and numbers of certain of the sea-birds that have made these barren rocks famous. — F. M. C.

Bird-Nesting with a Camera.³—Parts III and IV of this work appeared respectively in April and May, the latter part concluding the first volume of a book which will long hold first place among those

¹The Sharp-tailed Sparrows of Maine with Remarks on their Distribution and Relationship. By Arthur H. Norton. Proc. Portland Soc. Nat. Hist., II, 1897, pp. 97-102.

²The Story of the Farallones. Text by C. Barlow. Arranged and Published by H. R. Taylor, Editor of the Nidologist. Alameda, California, 1897, oblong 16mo, unpagged, numerous half-tone illustrations. Price 50 cents.

³Among British Birds in their Nesting Haunts. Illustrated by the Camera. By Oswin A. J. Lee. Parts III and IV, Edinburgh, David Douglas. Folio, Part III, pp. 79-120, pll. X; Part IV, pp. 121-159, pll. X.