

RECENT LITERATURE.

Pycraft on the Osteology of the Impennes.¹—Mr. Pycraft's second 'Contribution to the Osteology of Birds' treats the Penguins in the same thorough manner that his previous paper dealt with the Steganopodes. We have a detailed account of the skeleton, including that of the young, and this is followed by keys to the genera and species based on characters furnished by various portions of the adult skeleton. It is gratifying to have one more group of birds whose genera are based on osteological characters, also gratifying to see *Ratitæ* and *Carinatae* put in quotation marks.

Like Mr. Grant in the British Museum Catalogue, Mr. Pycraft admits six genera in this compact group of birds and these, as indicated by the diagram, have, with the exception of *Eudyptula*, which has lagged a little, become pretty evenly differentiated from the supposed ancestral form. To use an hibernicism, Mr. Pycraft gives us his conclusions at the beginning, where he states that, while the fore limb represents the high-water mark of skeletal specialization, the skull and other portions of the skeleton being much less specialized, the Penguins do not furnish us with any facts of great importance or carry us beyond the confines of the class. The distinctness of the metatarsals, a feature approached by *Fregata*, is alluded to and it is considered that they represent a halfway stage between the primitive, completely separate metatarsals on the one hand, and the highly-specialized cannon bone on the other, where the three metatarsals are all merged to form a single shaft.

It is pointed out that the Penguins are not plantigrade, but is Mr. Pycraft quite correct in saying that the legs are comparatively little used for the support of the body?—F. A. L.

Montgomery on the Food of Owls.—In the 'American Naturalist' for July, 1899,² Mr. Montgomery gives the results of his observations on the feeding habits of two species of Owls, — the Short-eared Owl (*Asio accipitrinus*) and the Long-eared Owl (*A. wilsonianus*), the locality being the vicinity of West Chester, Pa. His observations are novel in being based not upon the stomachs of Owls killed, but upon their 'food pellets' collected from the ground beneath their roosting trees. Four Long-

¹Contributions to the Osteology of Birds. Part II. Impennes. By W. P. Pycraft. Proc. Zool. Soc., London, Dec. 13, 1898.

²Observations on Owls, with particular regard to their Feeding Habits. By Thomas H. Montgomery, Jr. Am. Nat., Vol. XXXIII, July, 1899, pp. 563-572.