

and what are known generally as 'Picarian' birds, or Sharpe's Orders XXVIII-XXXIII, the Woodpeckers standing at the end of the series as a 'suborder' Pici of his Piciformes. According to statistics given in the preface, Volume II includes 454 genera and 2861 species, making for the two volumes 1284 genera and 6487 species. Compared with Gray's 'Hand list' of 1871, we have an estimated increase of about 500 genera and 1500 species during the thirty years that have passed since the publication of Gray's work.

Dr. Sharpe calls attention to his having "reverted to the old-fashioned name of *Cypselus* for the Swifts, instead of *Apus* of Scopoli," affirming: "For my own part I gladly accept any excuse which restores such a well-known name as *Cypselus*." His excuse is that Scopoli used the name *Apos* for a group of Crustacea in the same work in which he employed *Apus* for the Swifts, *Apos* also having some 80 pages precedence. Although doubtless words of wholly different origin, their 'correct' latinization, it is claimed, would give the same form, *Apus*, for both. But the two names were not thus written originally, and were enough different in form to give no real inconvenience. It is here, as in so many other cases, only the 'emendation' rule that gives rise to trouble. But Dr. Sharpe would even go further, and, citing the case of *Pica* and *Picus*, says, "but I think that even in this case it may perhaps be better to suppress *Pica* as the generic name of the Magpies;" yet, in speaking of *Cypselus*, a few lines later, he says, "and I can only regret that equally good reasons cannot be found to replace some of the old-fashioned generic names which recent research proves to have been antedated." Although *Pica* comes into the category of "old-fashioned generic names," we fear its fate when our author reaches it in the 'Hand-list.'—J. A. A.

Dubois's 'Synopsis Avium.'—Since our notice of Part I of this useful work (Auk, XVII, p. 81), Parts II, III and IV<sup>1</sup> have appeared, carrying the work to p. 288 and pl. vi. Part II contains the Pici, Heterodactylæ, Amphibolæ, Anisodactylæ, and Macrochires; Part III, the Macrochires, Tracheophonæ, and Oligomyodæ; Part IV, the Tyrannidæ, Hirundinidæ, Ampelidæ, Paramythiidæ, and part of the Muscicapidæ. The number of genera thus far treated is 747, and the number of species, 4014, with 909 additional subspecies. As shown by the names of the groups just cited, the nomenclature of the higher groups is very different from that employed in the British Museum 'Hand-List,' and the method of treatment is also quite different, Dubois's 'Synopsis' being closely modelled after Gray's 'Hand-list'; but it gives fuller references, and being well brought down to date, will prove a most helpful manual of reference for all workers in systematic ornithology. We are glad to see the work

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<sup>1</sup> Fascicule II, 1900, pp. 81-160, pl. ii; Fascicule III, 1900, pp. 161-224, pll. iii and iv; Fascicule IV, 1900, pp. 225-288, pll. v and vi.

making such satisfactory progress, the author having thus far well kept his promise to bring out the work in quarterly parts till completed.—  
J. A. A.

Shelley's '*Birds of Africa*.'<sup>1</sup>—This work on the Birds of Africa, by an author so well known as Captain Shelley, promises to be one of the most important of recent faunal publications on ornithology. The work has for its scope all of Africa south of 1° N. lat., and Madagascar. The first volume, published in 1896, consists of a list of the species and higher groups, and may be called, as the author says, a '*Nomenclator Avium Æthiopicarum*.' The number of species is 2534, and includes the generic synonymy and references to the authorities for the species names as adopted, to the British Museum '*Catalogue of Birds*,' and to works where the species have been figured. The list begins with the Passeres, or Passeriformes, and ends with the Struthioniformes.

Volume II was issued in two parts during the year 1900. In the preface to this volume the author states, after some remarks on the classification adopted, his method of treatment to be as follows: "With regard to the synonymy of the species: I begin with what I consider to be the most correct name: quote the '*Catalogue of the Birds of the British Museum*,' where full synonymy is given in detail, and add only such references which have not appeared in that great work. I follow on with a description of the plumage, taken, when possible, from the specimens in the British Museum, . . . and finish with all the details I can find regarding the distribution and habits of the species which I consider to be of interest. The colored plates are intended to illustrate, in the best possible style, . . . all the hitherto unfigured, or incorrectly figured, species" of the Æthiopian Region. The fourteen plates in volume I illustrate 29 species, and are of a high grade of excellence. The heavy paper and clear and pleasing typography of the text leave nothing to be desired in the way of book-making.

Volume II gives descriptions and biographies of 169 species, beginning with the genus *Pitta* and ending with *Anthus*, and includes keys for the higher groups as well as for the species. The biographical matter is naturally variable in amount, being quite extended in the case of well-known species, and necessarily meagre in others.

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<sup>1</sup>The | *Birds of Africa*, | comprising all the species which occur | in the |  
Ethiopian Region. | By | G. E. Shelley, F. Z. S., F. R. G. S., &c. | (late Gren-  
adier Guards), | Author of '*A Handbook to the Birds of Egypt*', '*Monograph*  
of the Sun-birds,' etc. | — | Vol. I. | List. | — | London: | Published for the  
Author by | R. H. Porter, 18 Princes Street, Cavendish Square, W. — 4to,  
Vol. I, 1896, pp. i-viii + 1-196; Vol. II, Part I, 1900, pp. 1-160, pll. i-vii;  
Part 2, 1900, pp. i-vii + 161-348, pll. viii-xiv. Price, Vol. I, 10s 6d net; each  
part of Vol. II, 21s net.