

hands and some twenty pages are devoted to a history of the nomenclature of the group and the relationship of the species. No less than fourteen new genera of Kingfishers are proposed so that with those previously available every really distinct species must now be provided with a generic name. It is not for us to criticise Mr. Mathews' work for upon the standards now prevailing in other families, this subdivision is apparently perfectly justifiable if one desires to be consistent, but it only goes to prove that the utility of the generic name is being reduced to *nil* and it would seem that the time is not far distant when we must begin the reverse process of grouping 'natural genera' together into 'genera de convenience' if the first term of our technical names is to mean anything more than the second. The more we use generic nomenclature to designate facts in differentiation the less use it becomes as a means of indicating to some one else what we are talking about.

In the discussion of *Syma torotoro* three new subspecies are described from New Guinea while one new race of *Dacelo leachii* from Australia and one from New Guinea are described. *Monarchalcyon cyanocephalus* Sharpe is renamed *Dacelalcyon confusus*.—W. S.

Grinnell on the Name of the American Barn Swallow.¹—Dr. Grinnell has brought up in this note a matter of no little importance. The Barn Swallow was originally described as *Hirundo erythrogaster*. In the first edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' it appears as *Chelidon erythrogaster* although Dr. Stejneger in referring it to this genus had written it *erythrogastra*. In the second edition where it is still referred to *Chelidon* and in the third where it is put back into *Hirundo* the feminized form *erythrogastra* is used. Recently Dr. Oberholser has claimed that the proper feminine of *gaster* is *gastris* and writes it *erythrogastris* and finally comes Dr. Grinnell with the explanation that the word is not an adjective at all but a noun and therefore should retain its original form *erythrogaster* under all circumstances. He seems to be absolutely right and the action of the original A. O. U. Committee should be upheld. In spite of all this Dr. Elliot Coues always employed *erythrogastra* and in commenting upon the form *Chelidon erythrogaster* said "wrong for genus and wrong for gender." It would be interesting to know what his argument in the case would be. It is perhaps one where even Latin experts will disagree.

A glance at the index to Sharpe's 'Hand-List of Birds' shows many discrepancies in handling such cases. Both *-gaster* and *-gastra* are used with feminine genera, *-venter* with both masculine and neuter and *-ventris* with masculine and feminine. So there seems much to correct no matter what view we adopt. Drs. Grinnell and Oberholser have apparently discovered another 'mare's nest' for the nomenclatorist.—W. S.

¹ The Name of the American Barn Swallow. By J. Grinnell. The Condor, XX, p. 92, March 19, 1918.