

English names only are used so that all of the complications of nomenclature which have no place in such a list are avoided.

We congratulate the Illinois Society and Mr. Gault upon an admirable piece of work which came out just in time for many of the visiting members of the A. O. U. to take copies home with them as souvenirs of the first Chicago meeting of the Union.—W. S.

Chapin on the Genus *Steganura*.¹—Mr. Chapin has made a careful study of the long-tailed Paradise Whydahs examining all of the material in the principal museums of America and Europe. He comes to the conclusion that there are two perfectly distinct species, *Steganura paradisaea* and *S. aucupum* the ranges of which overlap in the region south of the Congo forest and at one or two other points. The much narrower point to the long tail feathers in *paradisaea* seems to be a constant difference as compared with the broader, rounder tip in *S. aucupum*.

Of the latter Mr. Chapin recognizes four subspecies three of which are new: *S. a. longicauda* (p. 5) Uelle District; *S. a. nilotica* (p. 5) Blue Nile, and *S. a. obtusa* (p. 6) Nyasaland.

The Whydahs are birds of the short-grass plains and abhor the rain forests. Mr. Chapin suggests that originally *S. aucupum* occupied the northern, and *S. paradisaea* the southern, grass-lands, separated by the forests which then reached to the eastern coast. With the reduction of the eastern portion of the forest the two forms spread; the northern occupying isolated areas suited to its needs has been differentiated into several races through isolation, while the southern, which has maintained a continuous distribution, has not. His theory seems to be supported by the facts which he presents.—W. S.

Chapman on the Bird Department of the American Museum.²—This paper contributed to the Museum's magazine 'Natural History' is an interesting historical sketch of the department with which Dr. Chapman, at present its head, has been associated almost since its inception, while most of its activities have been carried on on lines which he has laid down.

We learn that the study collection now consists of 200,000 specimens while no less than sixty-three expeditions have gone out under the museum's auspices partly or wholly in the interests of the department of birds. Beside the historical portion of the article there is an excellent outline of the objects of a department of birds and the uses of exhibition and research collections.—W. S.

¹ The Species and Geographic Races of *Steganura* By James P. Chapin American Museum Novitates No. 43 September 6, 1922.

² The Department of Birds, American Museum. Its History and Aims. By Frank M. Chapman. Reprinted from *Natural History*, Vol. XXII, No. 4, pp 306-318, 1922.