

most extreme of the proposals for genus splitting that has yet appeared. The whole list of South African birds is considered in a running text fairly bristling with new names, several appearing on nearly every page. Papers such as this will do more to check the mania for new genera than anything else as they demonstrate how impossible it is to inflict such a burden upon nomenclature.

The author, like most of the other advocates of the practice, fails entirely to grasp the point that we are trying to make our technical names perform two services (see p. 000).

Musselman, T. E. A History of the Birds of Illinois. (Jour. Ill. State Historical Society, April-July, 1921, pp. 1-73.)—Covers the early history of the country, the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon, a list of migration dates and an annotated list of species.

Publications on Bird Protection.

Bird Notes and News. X, No. 2, 3 and 4. 1922.—From this journal we learn that the serious destruction of sea birds from oil discharged from vessels is as bad as ever, and it is pointed out that even if oil is not discharged within the three mile limit it will drift in with the wind or tide. There is also a biographical sketch of Mr. W. Hudson and an account of the activities of the "watchers," who are employed each year to guard the rarest British birds, notably the Kite and the Chough, from collectors who would otherwise effect their total extermination.

Eighteenth Annual Report of the National Association of Audubon Societies. (Bird Lore, December, 1922.)—Interesting as usual with detailed reports of the field agents and of no less than 62 state or affiliated societies. A portrait of Louis Agassiz Fuertes forms a frontispiece.

Report of the Chief of Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Dept. Agriculture. Among the many activities of the Survey we note that over 100 million acres of ground has now been treated with poison and the extermination of the Prairie Dog and other rodents practically accomplished in these areas. Damage has been done to shell fish by Ducks in Massachusetts but investigation shows that the scallop was the only kind and that the White-winged Scoter is the culprit, injury by other species being negligible. Patrolling the beds by the fishermen, who are at no expense for their upkeep, is suggested. Activities in bird banding, distributional and economic work are described, while steps are being taken to settle the dispute over the Malheur Lake Reservation in Oregon which has been threatened with destruction.

Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. VI, No. 9. List of members and account of activities also a paper by L. R. Talbot on birds observed on an Atlantic Liner, among others a Montana Junco, though no information is given as to how this remarkable identification was made. We find ourselves unable to distinguish skins of this Junco from allied forms at the distance indicated.

New Jersey Audubon Society Twelfth Annual Report. Reports of the society's ineffectual effort to the placing of the Bobolink on the protected list.

Game Laws for 1922. The usual full synopsis of Messrs. Lawyer and Earnshaw of the Biological Survey. Also as a separate publication the 'Directory of Organizations Concerned with Bird and Game Protection.'

Canadian Department of the Interior has published a number of pamphlets 'Birds of a Manitoba Garden' by N. Criddle; 'Protection of Bird Neighbours' by Hoyes Lloyd; and 'Canada's Feathered Friends'; 'Lessons in Bird Protection,' 'Bird Houses,' by P. A. Taverner.

Fins, Feathers and Fur. September, 1922. Contains a paper by J. R. Nannestad on Bird Life on Albert Lee Lake.

The Gull. June, 1922 to February, 1923. Contains many local notes by members of the Audubon Society of the Pacific, also articles by Dr. Casey A. Wood on bird observations in British Guiana, Bermuda and Barbados.

Florida Audubon Bulletin . March, 1922. Describes efforts to save the Bobwhite by posting grounds.

Arbor Day and Bird Day. Penna. Dept. of Public Instruction. October, 1922. Is a very attractive pamphlet with excellent illustrations.

Iowa Conservation. VI, No. 2 and 3. Contains much of interest to the bird and forest lover.

CORRESPONDENCE

"Generic Subdivision".—"The Genus Debased."

Editor of 'THE AUK.'

Dear Sir:—While disclaiming any desire for controversy, I would like to present my personal views concerning the matter discussed under the above separate headings in the January 'Auk.' I hesitate to enter the ring against so formidable an array of opponents, but I cannot rest easy until I have "had my say" on the subject. I promise that this will be my last word on the subject!

In the first place, I cannot concede that "it is admittedly impossible to formulate an exact definition of such an elusive concept as a genus"; on the other hand, I maintain that such definition is not only possible but that there need be no difficulty in understanding what a genus, scientifically characterized, really is. I say *scientifically* characterized, because a genus not thus characterized—based simply on the criterion of "convenience," for example—is not a genus in the true sense of the word.

As long ago as 1901, in the Preface to Part I 'Birds of North and Middle America,' I defined the requisites of a genus in terms which, since I have no reason to modify them now, are quoted below:—"Accepting evolution as an established fact . . . there are no "hard and fast lines," no gaps, or "missing links" in the chain of existing animal forms except as they are caused by the extinction of certain intermediate types; there-