able, however, that these meteorological factors stimulate only in a secondary way, determining the day of flight rather than the time of year. They can scarcely be the primary stimuli, because they do not always lead to migration but do so only at the appropriate seasons: the pressure stimulus, moreover, is the same for northward as for southward migration.

In discussing the causes of migration we have accordingly to consider (a) factors which, without being truly causative, may make migration advantageous and thus give the habit a survival value; (b) factors which may in the past have helped to originate and develop the habit; (c) factors which periodically stimulate the habit to activity at the proper seasons; and (d) factors which may act as secondary stimuli determining the exact time of departure, whether from the winter or summer home or from some intermediate stopping places. My submission is that it is necessary to distinguish clearly in which of these ways any particular factor is being considered as possibly operating, and that to think of the cause of migration as a simple unity would be to ignore the undoubted existence of an inherited habit which has a past as well as a present.

A. Landsborough Thomson.

London, England.
July 25, 1924.

A Plea for More Rational Common Names.

Editor of 'The Auk':

I realize that this subject has been often discussed, but an article on Panama birds in the April 'Auk' (Vol. XLI, pp. 304–326, 1924) demonstrates anew our need for a better system of common names for foreign birds. Such designations as "Central American Squirrel-Cuckoo," "Panama Sittasomus," "Hick's Seed-Eater," and "Panama Buff-Throated Saltator"—selected from among many of like kind in the paper before me—will illustrate my meaning. Those who work with Neotropical birds in the field know that no such epithets are ever hurled at them by their human nationals.

Perhaps the manufacturers of these synthetic names will argue that every bird should have an English as well as a Latin name; but should it? North of the Mexican boundary, yes; for here English names are demanded by an ever increasing body of bird-lovers interested in the native avifauna only as birds in the bush, and to whom anything that smacks of scientific nomenclature is distasteful. But the same conditions do not obtain south of our borders. In South America there are no bird-lovers save the naturalists (who need no common names) and those who know birds best by their savor in the pot. And even were bird-lovers legion in our sister republics, English names would be worse than useless to them.

The great majority of Neotropical species have not been given vernacular names because they are unknown to the natives of the countries they

inhabit, and when known at all to English-speaking people they are familiar by their definite scientific names. Should we presume to rectify this condition by coining names unintelligible to inhabitants of the lands where the birds occur? In view of our vigorous protests against some of the names applied by the English to our American birds, I think not.

Dr. Chapman, revolting against these "machine-made" names, went so far as to exclude even vernacular names from his monumental work on the birds of Colombia. I would, however, urge the use of vernacular names whenever they can be obtained, for they are most valuable aids to the field worker. Those given in von Ihering's works helped me greatly when I first began collecting birds in Brazil. For instance, if I sought information regarding *Piaya cayana*, inquiry as to the "Alma de Gato" would surely bring results; but I venture the assertion that Mr. Hallinan never learned anything of this species by asking natives of Panama about the "Central American Squirrel-Cuckoo."

Only field men are in a position to obtain real vernacular names for our tropical American birds and should they make the most of their opportunities perhaps the writers of monogaphs and check-lists would not feel driven to invent meaningless appellations. Where no vernacular names exist I can see nothing to be gained by vain attempts to supply them from the laboratory, and where they do exist it would seem far more appropriate to use them in their original forms than to translate them, often through a third language, into English. If "Seriema" can find its way unaltered even into our dictionaries why need we draw upon the French for our "Tinamou" and "Toucan"? Is the Tupi "Inhambú" harder to pronounce or the Portuguese "Tucano" less euphonious? And would not even an Aztec name be preferable to "Lawrence's Bent-billed Flycatcher"?

ERNEST G. HOLT.

312 Bell Building, Montgomery, Ala.
June 2, 1924.

[While we agree in the main with Mr. Holt's argument, there is one phase of the question that he has apparently not considered and that is the necessity for English names for foreign birds and mammals in zoological gardens, public museums and to a certain extent in popular works on natural history. Where Spanish or Aztec names are short and easy of pronunciation they may be adopted by English-speaking people but when it comes to longer names, even "Alma de Gato," they are no better than Latin scientific names for the purposes I have mentioned, and they will not be adopted. Eventually some sort of English name will be proposed for exotic species and it may be better for some person thoroughly familiar with the subject, like Mr. Ridgway in his 'Birds of North and Middle America,' to propose names which those in need may adopt than to leave the matter to some unqualified dealer or publisher. At the same time we are quite as

much opposed as is Mr. Holt to such long-drawn-out names as those which he criticizes (see antea p. 495) but where the solution of the problem is to be found we are at a loss to suggest.—W. S.]

NOTES AND NEWS.

MONTAGUE CHAMBERLAIN, a Founder of the American Ornithologists' Union and, since 1901, a Corresponding Fellow, died in Boston, Mass., Feb. 10, 1924, in the 80th year of his age, as a result of a recent fall. He was the son of Samuel M. and Catherine W. (Stevens) Chamberlain, and was born in St. John, N. B., April 5, 1844. He received his education in private schools in his native city and at the age of 14 began work with the firm of J. & W. F. Harrison, wholesale grocers of that city. He served as bookkeeper for 18 years and from 1885 to 1887 was a member of the firm. For 10 years he was an active member of the Canadian army and retired with the rank of captain.

In 1889 he was appointed Assistant Secretary to the Harvard Corporation, being assigned duties now allotted to the Recorder of the University and four years later became Secretary of the Lawrence Scientific School, a position which he held until 1900. He was greatly interested in Indians and in 1899 published a 'Maliseet Vocabulary' and 'The Penobscot Indians,' and in 1904 established a library of a thousand volumes for the Indians at Old Town, Maine. For several years he lived at Groton, Mass., where he devoted his attention to horticulture and specialized in the cultivation of gladiolus in which he was particularly interested. In 1907 he married Miss Anna Sartoris Prout of Petersburg, Va., who died in 1913. After the death of his wife he returned to New Brunswick for a time but his last years were spent in Boston or its vicinity.

Chamberlain's ornithological activity began about 1870 and continued until his retirement from the Lawrence Scientific School. He was elected a Corresponding Member of the Nuttall Ornithological Club in 1881, a Resident Member in 1888, and served as Editor from Dec. 3, 1888 to Jan. 23, 1893. His ornithological publications relate mainly to the birds of Canada and the first, entitled 'Canadian Birds,' appeared in 1870. To the pages of the 'Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club' and 'The Auk' he contributed a score or more of papers and notes, many of them on the local occurrence or habits of the birds of New Brunswick. Of his other works the most important are: "A Catalogue of the Birds of New Brunswick," published in 1882 in the 'Bulletin of the Natural History Society of New Brunswick;' 'A Catalogue of Canadian Birds,' 1887, a book of 143 pages treating of 556 species; 'Birds of Greenland,' 1891, based on the observations of A. T. Hagerup; a revised version of 'Nuttall's Manual' which went through three editions, 1891, 1896 and 1903 (see 'The Auk,' 1903, p. 314); and a brief account of 'Some Canadian Birds' which ap-