

(3) The systematic treatment of the order Phytolaccaceæ, by Hans Walter, differs but slightly from that adopted by Bentham and Hooker in the "Genera Plantarum." The three tribes into which the order is there divided—Rivineæ, Euphytolaccæ and Gyrostemoneæ—are here maintained with almost identical limitations. Bentham's genus *Stegnosperma*, classed in the "Genera Plantarum" as a *genus anomalum*, is regarded by Walter as the type of a distinct subfamily, the order being divided into two subfamilies—Phytolacchoideæ and Stegnospermoideæ, the latter containing the single genus *Stegnosperma*. There has been considerable difference of opinion as to the limitation of this order, especially in relation to the Ficoideæ, certain genera having been included by different authors in each family. The criterion of one or more than one ovule in the carpel is not a universal one, and the author of the present monograph is convinced that the structure of the inflorescence forms a better means of distinction between the two families. A good proportion of new species is described in the course of the work; thus, of twenty-six species of *Phytolacca*, seven are here described for the first time.

A. B. R.

THE HAND-LIST OF BIRDS.

A Hand-list of the Genera and Species of Birds. (Nomenclator Avium tum Fossilium tum Viventium.) By R. Bowdler Sharpe. Vol. v. Pp. xx+694. (London: British Museum, Natural History, 1909.) Price 20s.

DR. SHARPE may be assured not only of our own congratulations, but of those of ornithologists in general, on the completion of his heavy task and the issue of the final volume of a work the first of which appeared so long ago as 1899. No one who has not tried it can have any conception of the enormous amount of labour involved in a task of this nature, and when we add that the author estimates the total number of distinguishable forms of birds as close upon 19,000, it will be unnecessary further to emphasise the magnitude of the work just brought to a close.

The value of these five volumes to the working ornithologist—whether we altogether agree or not with the author's view as to the limitations of genera, the multiplication of family groups, and the non-recognition of local races—can scarcely be overestimated, although it must always be borne in mind that the work is meant to be used in connection with the British Museum Catalogue of Birds, to the volumes of which references are given under the headings of the various species. In the case of many species, one or two synonyms are given; and almost the only improvement that we could suggest is that in the case of genera and species where well known names have been changed it would have been better if a larger number of synonyms had been quoted, which could have been done without any increase in the bulk of the volume, as there is a large amount of blank paper.

We are glad to see that in the introduction Dr. Sharpe takes the opportunity of making certain

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amendments in the arrangement of the "orders" of birds, such emendations being, in our opinion, for the most part a decided improvement on his previous scheme. The most important item in this remodelling is the abolition of *Carinatae* and *Ratitae* as the two main divisions of existing birds, and the inclusion of the tinamus with the ostriches to form one group distinguished by the structure of the palate from a second group containing all other existing birds. When, however, the author proposes to regard these two groups (*Neognathae* and *Palæognathae*) as equivalent in rank to the one (*Saururæ*) containing *Archæopteryx*, we beg to dissent from his views.

In our notices of at least one of the previous volumes of the "Hand-list" we have directed attention to the want of uniformity in the spelling of geographical names. Unfortunately, the author has not availed himself of the hint, with the result that the "pleasing" variety of orthography is more pronounced in the present issue than in any of its predecessors. We have, for instance, Malay Peninsula and Malayan Peninsula on the same page (62), and Malacca in another place; *Dentrecasteaux* (p. 63) and *D'Entrecasteaux* (p. 69); *Niasa-land* (p. 47), *Nyasa-land* (p. 35), and *Nyasa Land* (p. 474); *Cashmere* (p. 167) and *Kashmir* (p. 173); *Szechuen* (p. 233) and *Szechuan* (p. 268); *Somali-land* (p. 184) and *Somali Land* (p. 465); *Damara-land* (p. 185) and *Damara Land* (p. 475); and *Island of St. Thomas* in one place (p. 463) and *S. Thomè Isl.* in another (p. 635). We may also note (p. 175) *Lipikia* for *Likipia*. In our own experience, the only way to avoid discrepancies of the above nature is to enter every name as it occurs in a list, and to check all subsequent occurrences. With the exception of these discrepancies, which are creditable neither to the author nor to the museum, we have little except commendation to bestow on the volume before us.

For reference purposes, the whole work suffers, however, from the circumstance that the page-headings on both sides are taken up by useless repetitions of the general title, whereas the heading on one side should have carried the family-names. In the case of large families, to find the family-position of a genus it is necessary, after ascertaining the page on which it occurs from the index, to turn back until the family-name is reached, or to refer to the table of contents. In this respect the work compares badly with the "Catalogue of Birds' Eggs." A general index to the five volumes would also have been very useful.

R. L.

SOCIAL EVOLUTION.

Darwinism and Modern Socialism. By F. W. Headley. Pp. xv+342. (London: Methuen and Co., 1909.) Price 5s. net.

MR. HEADLEY has given the general reader a comprehensive and well-stated case against Socialism. He brings together the best of the known economic arguments, and bases the whole on biological principles.

The text is that "it is very difficult for a follower of Darwin and Weismann to be a Socialist." In a