

formation in respect to England, which is summarised by Mr. M. Vaughan in the March number of *British Birds*. As the result of the inquiry it seems practically certain that a decrease—and this not merely local—has taken place in the case of several species, notably the whitethroat, the redstart, the marten, the swallow, and the wryneck. No attempt is made to explain the diminution in numbers, which we have heard attributed, at least in the case of some species, to shooting and netting on the Continent.

In the February number of *The Zoologist* Mr. J. M. Dewar records further observations on the manner in which oyster-catchers open mussels and other bivalves. Mussels seldom open their shells wide enough to enable the bird to introduce its beak, except by the way of the gap for the byssus, and when this is not accessible, the oyster-catcher resorts to careful tapping, which causes the mollusc to rotate one valve on the other, and thus afford an entrance for the beak. Small mussels are frequently hammered to pieces by repeated blows with the beak.

Nos. 6 and 7 of *The Austral Avian Record* are devoted to a list of the species of Australian birds named by John Gould, and the present location of the type specimens, drawn up by Messrs. Witmer Stone and Mathews. The Gould Australian collection was sold in 1847 to Dr. T. B. (not J., as has been stated) Wilson, of Philadelphia. The type specimens are for the most part in the museum of the Philadelphia Academy; although the greater part of those of species named by Gould subsequently to the 1847 sale are in the British Museum. Gould named 426 or 427 Australian birds (both numbers are given at the end of the list) of which 341 stand, either as species or subspecies. The list will be valuable to systematic ornithologists.

In his presidential address to the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, as reported in *The Emu* of January, Mr. J. M. Mellor emphasised the necessity of continued bird protection and the working of the present Act. A serious defect in this is the opportunity afforded by merely partial protection for a heavy destruction of certain species during the Christmas holidays.

In *Science* of February 27, Dr. R. W. Shufeldt announces a forthcoming memoir on the Pleistocene avifauna of the Oregon desert, in which three extinct species will be described. R. L.

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