

circumstance that the discarded element may be a vowel, a consonant, or even one or more syllables, *i. e.*, a sound or combination of sounds. This method of abridgement admits of a comprehensive application of the principle of the stenographic root to which the proper affixes may be joined.

The recognition and use of the fonostenographic root introduces for the first time in shorthand systems the rational application of the natural but unconscious linguistic process of adaptation to the purposive abbreviation of words. This root (also called 'sound root' or 'phonetic radical') is not of course the etymologic root of the word or words to be written; it is defined as the 'strong and significant' element of the word; in its use the author grasps and utilizes a well known law of verbal abridgement which supplies an easy and natural rule for the simple and effective contraction and abbreviation of vocables. It would seem that in his new system the author has found the golden mean between the highest rapidity and readiest legibility—between those phonographic systems which, owing to complex structure and consequent illegibility in practice, can be acquired only by the highly gifted or the tirelessly industrious, and those other systems which have been rendered simple in structure by 'such limitations in principles and development' as to deprive them of the requisite adaptability to the exacting needs of the reporter. In the terse language of the author, "the former class appeals to a high standard of culture; the latter addresses itself to a lower plane of mental capability and development; the former taxes too heavily the head, and the latter demands an impossible dexterity of the hand." Hitherto shorthand has commonly been pursued empirically, with little or no regard to linguistic principles, and it is a gratification to note an attempt to bring it within the domain of linguistic science.

J. N. B. HEWITT.

A Concise Handbook of British Birds. By H. KIRKE SWANN. London, John Wheldon & Co. 1896. 16°. pp. 210.

The author of this recent addition to the apparently endless series of books treating of British birds, claims for his work a unique place

among its fellows on the ground of its small size and conciseness.

No space is given to remarks on the faunal position of the region under consideration, analyses of the birds which occur in it, synopses or keys to higher groups, or other preliminary or explanatory matter, it evidently being assumed that the reader is already more or less an ornithologist who will use the book as a pocket manual for ready reference.

Consequently, immediately after a 'list of genera,' we begin with 'Order Passeres,' 'Family Turdidæ,' 'Subfamily Turdinæ'—names merely—'Genus Turdus,' which is briefly defined. Then follows the species with a short statement of its 'habitat'—a term which is arbitrarily used as "meaning the region inhabited during the breeding season"—plumages, manner of occurrence, haunts, notes, nest, eggs and food, all very much condensed and with no striving for literary effect, but making useful, if not very readable, summarized biographies.

The most interesting point in Mr. Swann's book for American naturalists is his pronouncedly un-British stand in favor of trinomials. He seems to fully recognize—indeed, to glory in—the depth of his depravity, and remarks that he cannot expect to "escape censure for adopting the despised system," adding the fair challenge that, "until some of our ornithologists can suggest some other way of allowing a name to a recognised race without giving it the name of a species, I will adhere to trinomials." After this bold declaration can any one doubt that Mr. Swann's excommunication will speedily follow?

FRANK M. CHAPMAN.

SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS.

PSYCHE, AUGUST.

THE genus *Orphula* with its three New England species forms the subject of the continuation of A. P. Morse's paper on *N. E. Tryxalinæ*. A. R. Grote writes on the condition of the nomenclature of the species of *Apatela*. H. G. Dyar describes the early stages of *Cosmosoma auge*, and also the apparatus by which he conceives the noise made by *Dionychopus niveus* to be produced. Notice of a few recent publications completes the number.