

istence.''' Hence, "the only possible modern philosophical work which will be useful and fruitful for natural investigators must concern the theory of the method of natural scientific thought—for example, the questions of the theory of knowledge.''"

The lay reader who is interested in the developments of modern physics, but who is at the same time philosophically naive, will be stimulated by this exposition of scientific positivism. While the professional scientist will find no new information, he might do well to examine the assumptions of his own thinking in the light of this treatment. The theologian who seeks a scientific basis for his religious faith will, of course, find scant comfort. Yet, the book is a "must" for this group, because positivism is the scientific credo (or lack of it!) for an ever-increasing number of scientists. For these groups the book is recommended.

WAYNE B. DENNY

Oberlin College

Check-list of birds of the world. (Vol. 5.) James Lee Peters. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1945. Pp. xi + 306. \$5.00.

This is the most recent unit of the indispensable synopsis of avian taxonomy begun by this author in 1931. The plan in no way differs from that of the earlier segments. The usefulness of the work and the prevailingly high quality of Peters' taxonomic judgments are well known to every professional ornithologist. The accuracy and scholarship of the writing are of the first order. No treatise of this scope has been undertaken since completion of the now-outmoded *Handlist of the genera and species of birds* in 1909 by Sharpe.

Peters' Volume 5 deals with the following orders: Apodiformes (Trochilidae only), Coliiformes, Trogoniformes, and Coraciiformes. The hummingbirds, or Trochilidae, occupy over half the work and are a particularly difficult group. The genera of this family total 123, although there are only 327 species. One wishes for some organization of these genera into subfamilies. Basic revision of the hummingbirds is not feasible in the course of preparation of a world check-list. Peters largely follows Simon, the latest reviewer, but stresses the fact that generic differentiation has been overdone and offers a good point of advice for future students—construction of a system of generic classification based on the characters of the more conservatively differentiated female hummingbirds. The author records many worthwhile observations on hybrids, artifact trade skins and allocations of names and types such that substantial progress in the taxonomy of the group is made.

Probably no one will be able to offer a highly improved treatment of this peculiarly New World family who has not spent much time himself observing and collecting hummingbirds in the Neotropical region. The extreme mobility of these birds, the tendency toward vagrancy, the not infrequent differential migration and habitat preference of males and females, the elaborate and confusing aggressive and courtship displays, and the brief, merely essential, association of the sexes in the breeding season in many species are complicating aspects of hum-

mingbird biology that require this direct experience. The prospect of a definitive revision from the indoor school of "trochilidists," dealing largely with hummingbird "curios" imported from unfamiliar regions, seems slight indeed.

ALDEN H. MILLER

University of California, Berkeley

Catalogue Corner

Please write directly to the company indicated for any publication you wish mentioning the bulletin number and *Science*. Publications are gratis unless otherwise noted.

Water demineralizer for laboratories. A practical demineralizer which provides an easy and quick way to obtain mineral-free water by using ion-exchange resins for purification has been announced by the Barnstead Co. It is a compact, effective purifier with flow rate range of 5 to 15 gallons per hour. The Bantam model is particularly convenient for any application requiring a relatively small volume of demineralized (deionized) water because it employs a renewable resin cartridge and operates without attention or regeneration. The disposable cartridge eliminates the necessity of regenerating with acid and alkali solutions, backwashing, rinsing, etc. *The Barnstead Bantam Demineralizer, Bulletin 111 SC-461.* Barnstead Still and Sterilizer Co., Inc., 2 Lanesville Terrace, Forest Hills, Boston 31, Mass.

Precision measurement of absolute pressure. The Wallace and Tiernan Company has developed a new absolute pressure indicator for the accurate measurement of high vacuum with respect to atmospheric pressure. Often such measurements are complicated by the lack of adequate barometric pressure indicators or by errors entering into the correction computations. To overcome these difficulties this new instrument measures the vacuum in terms of pressure above absolute zero. The indication of the true vacuum is particularly important in such fields as radio tube loading and high vacuum distillation. *Technical Publication 256 SC-461.* Wallace and Tiernan Products, Inc., Belleville 9, N. J.

Built-in cabinet slide-viewer. The Technicon Company is able to supply a compact slide-viewer which is built right into the end of the file drawer in which the slides are kept. The "Technilume" occupies only four inches of space and the balance of the drawer is freely available for filing microslides, Kodachromes, or lantern slides. Any slide in the drawer may be quickly checked by merely holding it against the front spot-viewer, which is flush with the front cabinet surface. The viewing discs are of opal glass and provide evenly diffused illumination without "hot-spots" and cooling louvers set into the sides of the light chamber permit the light to remain on indefinitely without overheating. *The Lab-Aid "Technilume" Leaflet SC-461.* The Technicon Company, 215 East 149th Street, New York 51, N. Y.