

SYNOPSIS

OF THE

CHARACTERISTICS OF NORTH-AMERICAN BIRDS.

THE following synopsis of the orders of birds, taken partly from Keyserling and Blasius, will serve to illustrate the characteristics of the higher groups in American Ornithology:—

A.—HIND TOE ON THE SAME LEVEL WITH THE ANTERIOR ONES.

a. Posterior face or the sides of the tarsus more or less reticulated, granulated, or with scales more numerous or smaller than in front; sometimes naked. Anterior face of the tarsus never in one unbroken plate. Larynx without complex vocal muscles.

Order I. **RAPTORES.**—Base of the upper mandible with a soft skin or cere. Upper mandible compressed; its point curving down over that of the lower, forming a strong, sharp hook. Claws generally retractile. Toes, never two behind. Birds usually of large size and of powerful frame, embracing the so-called birds of prey.

Order II. **SCANSORES.**—Toes in pairs; two in front and two behind: the outer anterior being usually directed backwards; the inner, in *Trogonidae*. Tail-feathers eight to twelve.

Order III. **STRISORES.**—Toes either three anterior and one behind (or lateral), or four anterior: the hinder one is, however, usually versatile, or capable of direction more or less laterally forward. Tail-feathers never more than ten. Primaries always ten; the first, long.