

What object there can have been in publishing such a worthless production as this (10,000 copies were distributed), it is hard to imagine. We notice it chiefly to call attention to the folly and uselessness of issuing local lists that are based on few and imperfect observations. Every beginner in ornithology seems beset by a desire to print a list of the birds of his own neighborhood, and thinks himself quite competent for the task. The fact is there are few things that require such long training and exceptional talents to make the results of real value. Even then a list should not be published unless based on years of constant field-work or unless the region treated is practically unknown ground. It is, nevertheless, an excellent thing for the beginner to prepare his local list,—but for his own use. It gives him some valuable practice; its incompleteness may stimulate him to further discoveries; and it will doubtless afford him that most invaluable lesson,—how easy it is to make mistakes, and many of them.—C. F. B.

**The Quadrate Bone in Birds.\***—A paper by Miss Mary L. Walker treats of the quadrate bone of birds, describing one or more specimens from typical examples of each of the various groups proposed by Huxley. The quadrate is shown to have a characteristic shape in the different species examined, and from hastily running over a considerable number of crania it is apparent that the quadrate possesses much taxonomic importance. Its value, however, will doubtless prove to be comparative rather than positive, and will be found in the fact that it furnishes an additional point in summing up the evidence in any given case. Some of the facts brought forward in the paper show very clearly that, like most characters of birds, the form of the quadrate will need to be checked by others, and that, as has so often been said, it is not by any one character, but by the resultant of many, that birds must be classified. None of the *Machrochires* were examined by Miss Walker, and it may be said that the quadrate of Hummingbirds, Swifts, and Goatsuckers are built on the same general plan, the resemblance between Swifts and Goatsuckers in this particular being especially noticeable. The paper is confessedly “a short, and indeed, preliminary study,” and it is to be hoped that we may soon see it extended, for we cannot have too many aids in the classification of birds, and each additional taxonomic character is to be welcomed.—F. A. L.

**Minor Ornithological Publications.**—There has not been much of ornithological interest in the literary monthlies since they were last noticed in this department. *Harper's Monthly* since Vol. LXXI (see *Auk*, II, 372) has contained nothing in Vols. LXXII-LXXIX worth noticing here. *Scribner's Magazine* has so far (Vol. I-VI) contained no ornithological matter. *The Century Magazine* was last noticed (Vol. XXVI, 1883) in the

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\*Studies from the Museum of Zoölogy in University College, Dundee. Edited by D'Arcy W. Thompson, Professor. I. On the Form of the Quadrate Bone in Birds. By Mary L. Walker.