

**Birds Through an Opera Glass.\***—This little volume of some 223 pages is made up of sixty chapters, each of which relates to a single bird. Most of the species are the more conspicuous or interesting of our northern birds, the author's observations having been made either at Northampton, Massachusetts, or Locust Grove, New York. Many of the chapters were published in the 'Audubon Magazine' for 1886. These have been revised and largely re-written; the others now appear for the first time. The work is illustrated by some good woodcuts taken from Baird, Brewer, and Ridgway's 'History of North American Birds.' There is a preliminary chapter entitled, 'Hints to Observers', which includes a few simple and excellent rules intended for beginners.

Miss Merriam belongs to that class of observers and writers of which, so far as North America is concerned, Thoreau may be said to have been the originator, and Burroughs, Torrey, Maurice Thompson, and others, the disciples and followers. As with all of these, her field work seems to have been instigated and directed by an innate love of the woods and fields, and an interest, at once strong and affectionate, in their feathered inhabitants. Her sole weapon has been not a gun, but an opera glass; her object not the acquisition of specimens, but the study of the manners and habits of the living birds. Evidently she is particularly interested in their songs and call notes, for these receive marked attention in all her biographies. Her descriptions of them are perhaps as successful as those of most writers in this field, but it may well be doubted if it is really worth while to attempt anything definite of this kind. Either different ears hear differently, or, as is more probable, most bird notes are impossible of adequate rendering into words.

As an observer, Miss Merriam is unmistakably keen, discriminating, and accurate; as a writer, always simple and true, at times highly vigorous and original. Her attractive little book may be cordially recommended to all who wish to study our familiar birds, either with or without an opera glass.—W. B.

**Stone's Catalogue of the Muscicapidæ in the Collection of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.**†—Mr. Witmer Stone, a promising young ornithologist of Philadelphia, already well known to the readers of 'The Auk,' presents us in the present paper a catalogue of the Muscicapidæ, or Old World Flycatchers, contained in the Museum of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. This collection, as is well known, is rich in types, containing as it does Gould's types of his 'Birds of Australia,' and most of the types of the species described by Cassin, and much historic material from the collections of Gen. Massena, the Duke of Rivoli, Prince d'Esling, and Du Chaillu. Since the death of the late

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\* Birds Through an Opera Glass | by Florence A. Merriam | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin & Company | The Riverside Press, Cambridge | 1889.

† Catalogue of the Muscicapidæ in the Collection of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. By Witmer Stone. Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1889, pp. 146-154.