

**TURNER ON BIRDS: A SHORT AND
SUCCINCT HISTORY OF THE
PRINCIPAL BIRDS NOTICED BY PLINY
AND ARISTOTLE FIRST PUBLISHED BY
DOCTOR WILLIAM TURNER, 1544**

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A. H. EVANS

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DOCTOR WILLIAM TURNER,
1544.

EDITED,
WITH INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION, NOTES, AND APPENDIX,

BY
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CLARE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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PREFACE.

IN translating this treatise it has been thought advisable to adhere as closely as possible to the original text of Turner, though in many places a more modern style of phraseology would doubtless have better pleased the ear of the non-scientific reader.

Not a few difficult points of interpretation have arisen in the course of the work, and the Editor welcomes this opportunity of expressing his gratitude to Professor Newton and to Mr R. D. Archer-Hind of Trinity College for the invaluable help that he has received from them in elucidating the hard passages and in revising the proofs. The Editor's thanks are also due to the Syndics of the University Press for undertaking the present publication.

9, HARVEY ROAD,
CAMBRIDGE.
July, 1903.

NOTE

It may be remarked that the pages of Turner's work are not numbered in the original; but, for convenience of reference, the pagination is marked in the margin—the numbers being included in square brackets.

INTRODUCTION.

WILLIAM TURNER, author of the rare treatise here republished, was a native of Morpeth in Northumberland and is supposed to have been the son of a tanner of that town. By the aid of Thomas, the first Lord Wentworth, he was enabled to enter Pembroke Hall in the University of Cambridge, where he graduated B.A. and was elected a fellow of his College in 1530. At Pembroke he became acquainted with Ridley (who instructed him in Greek) and Latimer, two of the most earnest advocates of the Reformed doctrines, which he himself, both then and afterwards, strenuously embraced; but there is no need to dwell upon his theological views or the polemical works in which they were set forth.

While at Cambridge Turner was a zealous student of botany, and in 1538 published a *Libellus de re herbaria*. About two years later he left this University for Oxford, and soon after suffered imprisonment for preaching without a licence. On his release he quitted England, and travelled by way of the Netherlands and Germany to Italy, attending the botanical lectures of Luca Ghini at Bologna, where, or at Ferrara, he took the degree of M.D.

Thereafter he proceeded to Switzerland, forming a close friendship with the great naturalist Conrad Gesner of Zurich, Professor of Medicine and Philosophy in the School of that city, who held him in high esteem, and with whom he afterwards kept up a correspondence. He seems to have been at Basel in 1543, but early in 1544 he was at Cullen (Cologne), where he published not only the present work—dedicated

to Edward Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward the Sixth)—but also edited the *Dialogus de Avibus* of his friend Gybertus Longolius of Utrecht, who died the preceding year. He pursued his botanical studies in several parts of Germany, as well as in the Netherlands, including East Friesland, for he became physician to the Count of Emden, and visited the islands of Juist and Norderney lying off the coast of that province.

On the death of King Henry the Eighth he returned to England, becoming chaplain and physician to Lord Protector the Duke of Somerset; but he lived at Kew, where he established a botanic garden. He was, moreover, incorporated M.D. of Oxford, and was appointed a prebendary of York. In 1550 the Privy Council sent letters for his election as Provost of Oriel College in Oxford, but the post had been already filled, and a similar disappointment awaited him in regard to the Presidency of Magdalen College in the same University. He then applied to Sir William Cecil for leave to return to Germany, but was soon after consoled by being appointed Dean of Wells, and, having in 1551 published the first part of his *New Herbal*, was during the next year ordained priest by his old friend Ridley, then Bishop of London.

On the accession of Queen Mary Turner had to vacate his deanery, and betook himself for safety once more to the Continent, visiting Rome and several places in Germany and Switzerland. When Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne he returned to England, and recovered his deanery, to which was attached the rectory of Wedmore in Somersetshire; but in 1564 he was suspended for nonconformity and seems to have come to live in London. In 1557 he had addressed a letter on English Fishes to Gesner, which was included in that naturalist's *Historia Animalium*; and in 1562 he published the second part of his *Herbal*, which he dedicated to Lord Wentworth, the son of his original benefactor. On the 7th of July 1568 Turner died at his house in Crutched Friars in the City of London, and was buried in the church of St Olave, Hart Street.