

WAKE-ROBIN

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Wake-robin by John Burroughs

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JOHN BURROUGHS

WAKE-ROBIN

The American Museum of Natural History



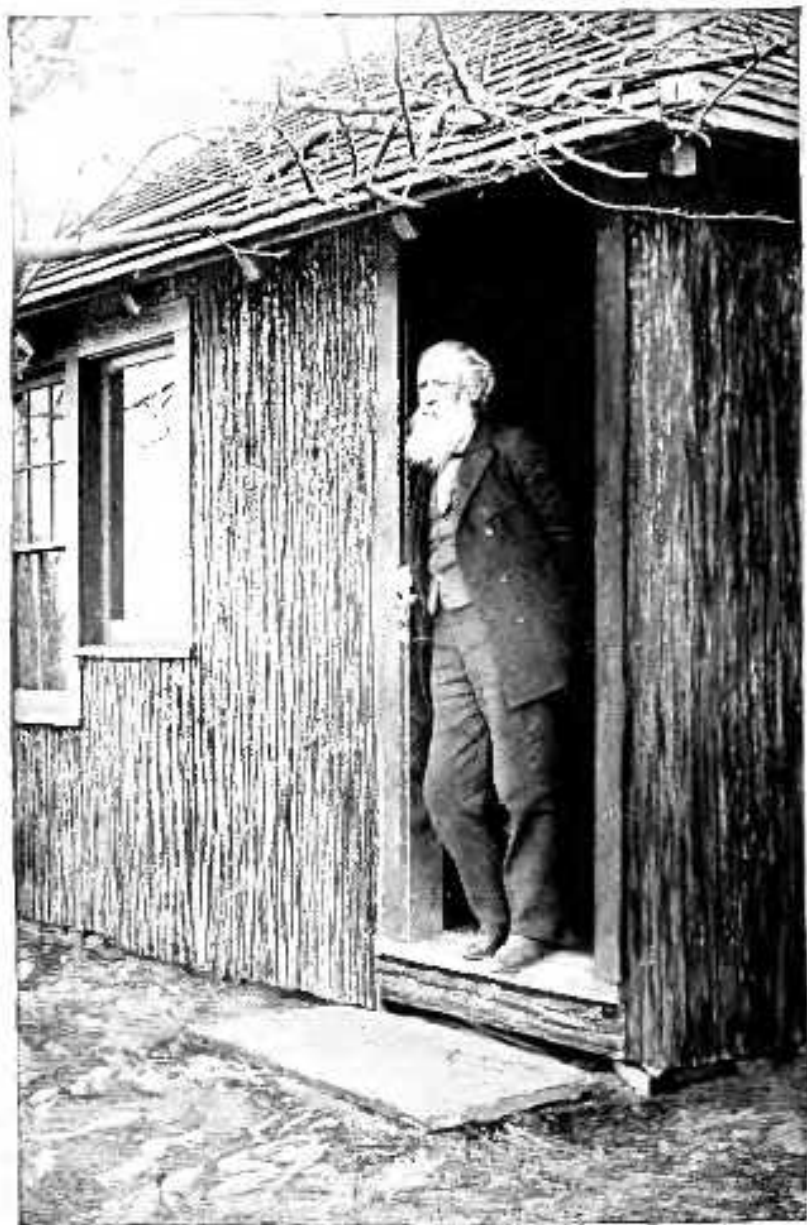
1869
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The good wishes of

John Burroughs

June 23^d 1909

Mrs. Henry Macaulay.



AT THE STUDY DOOR

WAKE-ROBIN

BY

JOHN BURROUGHS



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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

THIS is mainly a book about the Birds, or more properly an invitation to the study of Ornithology, and the purpose of the author will be carried out in proportion as it awakens and stimulates the interest of the reader in this branch of Natural History.

Though written less in the spirit of exact science than with the freedom of love and old acquaintance, yet I have in no instance taken liberties with facts, or allowed my imagination to influence me to the extent of giving a false impression or a wrong coloring. I have reaped my harvest more in the woods than in the study; what I offer, in fact, is a careful and conscientious record of actual observations and experiences, and is true as it stands written, every word of it. But what has interested me most in Ornithology is the pursuit, the chase, the discovery; that part of it which is akin to hunting, fishing, and wild sports, and which I could carry with me in my eye and ear wherever I went.

I cannot answer with much confidence the poet's inquiry,

"Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?"

but I have done what I could to bring home the "river and sky" with the sparrow I heard "singing at dawn on the alder bough." In other words, I have tried to present a live bird, — a bird in the woods or the fields, — with the atmosphere and associations of the place, and not merely a stuffed and labeled specimen.

A more specific title for the volume would have suited me better; but not being able to satisfy myself in this direction, I cast about for a word thoroughly in the atmosphere and spirit of the book, which I hope I have found in "Wake-Robin," the common name of the white *Trillium*, which blooms in all our woods, and which marks the arrival of all the birds.