

**A YEAR
WITH THE BIRDS**

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A Year with the Birds by W. Warde Fowler

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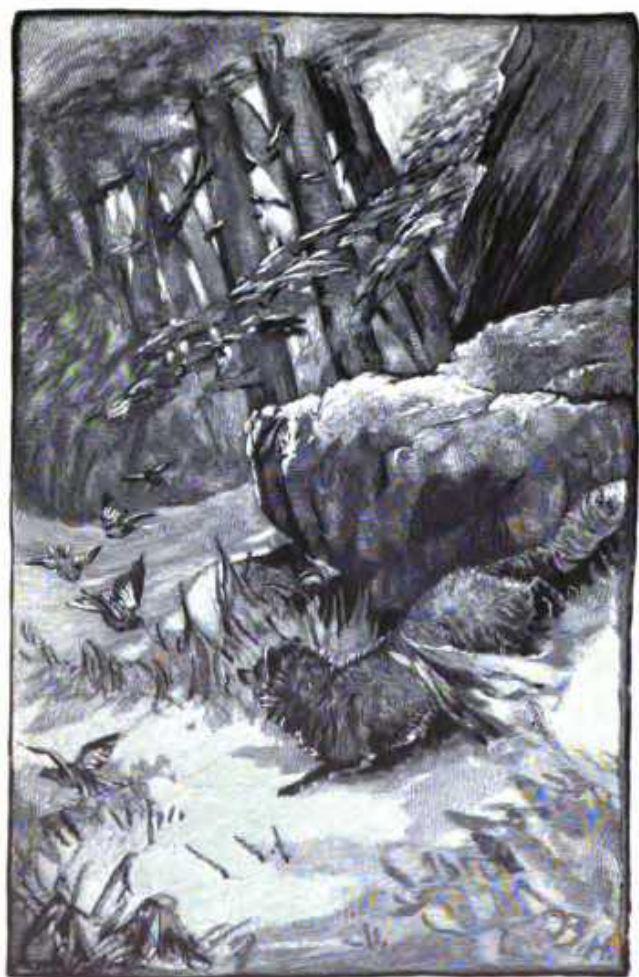
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W. WARDE FOWLER

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Fox and Snow-finches. — p. 100.

A YEAR WITH THE BIRDS

William
BY
W. WARDE FOWLER

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF THE BIRDS," ETC.

"L'uccello ha maggior copia di vita esteriore e interiore, che non hanno gli altri animali. Ora, se la vita è cosa più perfetta che il suo contrario, almeno nelle creature viventi: e se perciò la maggior copia di vita è maggiore perfezione; anche per questo modo séguita che la natura dagli uccelli sia più perfetta."—LEOPARDI: *Elogio degli uccelli*.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRYAN HOOK

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PREFACE.

THIS little book is nothing more than an attempt to help those who love birds, but know little about them, to realize something of the enjoyment which I have gained, in work-time as well as in holiday, for many years past, from the habit of watching and listening for my favourites.

What I have to tell, such as it is, is told in close relation to two or three localities: an English city, an English village, and a well-known district of the Alps. This novelty (if it be one) is not likely, I think, to cause the ordinary reader any difficulty. Oxford is so familiar to numbers of English people apart from its permanent residents, that I have ventured to write of it without stopping to describe its geography; and I have purposely confined myself to the city and its precincts, in order to show how rich in bird-life an English town may be. The Alps, too, are known to thousands, and the walk I have described in Chapter III., if the reader should be unacquainted with it, may easily be followed by reference to the excellent maps of the Oberland in the guide-books of Ball or Baedeker. The chapters

about the midland village, which lies in ordinary English country, will explain their own geography.

One word about the title and the arrangement of the chapters. We Oxford tutors always reckon our year as beginning with the October term, and ending with the close of the Long Vacation. My chapters are arranged on this reckoning; to an Oxford residence from October to June, broken only by short vacations, succeeds a brief holiday in the Alps; then comes a sojourn in the midlands; and of the leisurely studies which the latter part of the Long Vacation allows, I have given an ornithological specimen in the last chapter.

Some parts of the first, second, and fifth chapters have appeared in the *Oxford Magazine*, and I have to thank the Editors for leave to reprint them. The third chapter, or rather the substance of it, was given as a lecture to the energetic Natural History Society of Marlborough College, and has already been printed in their reports; the sixth chapter has been developed out of a paper lately read before the Oxford Philological Society.

The reader will notice that I have said very little about uncommon birds, and have tried to keep to the habits, songs, and haunts of the commoner kinds, which their very abundance endears to their human friends. I have made no collection, and it will therefore be obvious to ornithologists that I have no scientific knowledge of structure and classification beyond that which I have obtained at second-hand. And, indeed, if I thought I