

# **WAYS OF WOOD FOLK**

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Ways of Wood Folk by William J. Long

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**WILLIAM J. LONG**

**WAYS OF  
WOOD FOLK**





TO PLATO, the owl, who looks  
over my shoulder as I write, and  
who knows all about the woods.

## PREFACE.

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"ALL crows are alike," said a wise man, speaking of politicians. That is quite true—in the dark. By daylight, however, there is as much difference, within and without, in the first two crows one meets as in the first two men or women. I asked a little child once, who was telling me all about her chicken, how she knew her chicken from twenty others just like him in the flock. "How do I know my chicken? I know him by his little face," she said. And sure enough, the face, when you looked at it closely, was different from all other faces.

This is undoubtedly true of all birds and all animals. They recognize each other instantly amid multitudes of their kind; and one who watches them patiently sees quite as many odd ways and individualities among Wood Folk as among other people. No matter, therefore, how well you know the habits of crows or the habits of caribou in general, watch the first one that crosses your path as if he were an entire stranger; open eyes to see and heart to interpret, and you will surely find some new thing, some curious unrecorded way, to give delight to your tramp and bring you home with a new interest.

This individuality of the wild creatures will account, perhaps, for many of these Ways, which can seem no more curious or startling to the reader than to the writer when he first discovered them. They are, almost entirely, the records of personal observation in the woods and fields. Occasionally, when I know my hunter or woodsman well, I have taken his testimony, but never without weighing it carefully, and proving it whenever possible by watching the animal in question for days or weeks till I found for myself that it was all true.

The sketches are taken almost at random from old notebooks and summer journals. About them gather a host of associations, of living-over-agains, that have made it a delight to write them; associations of the winter woods, of apple blossoms and nest-building, of New England uplands and wilderness rivers, of camps and canoes, of snowshoes and trout rods, of sunrise on the hills, when one climbed for the eagle's nest, and twilight on the yellow wind-swept beaches, where the surf sobbed far away, and wings twanged like reeds in the wind swooping down to decoys, — all thronging about one, eager to be remembered if not recorded. Among them, most eager, most intense, most frequent of all associations, there is a boy with nerves all a-tingle at the vast sweet mystery that rustled in every wood, following the call of the winds and the birds, or wandering alone where the spirit moved him, who never studied nature consciously, but only loved it, and who found out many of these Ways long ago, guided solely by a boy's instinct.



*Preface.*

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If they speak to other boys, as to fellow explorers in the always new world, if they bring back to older children happy memories of a golden age when nature and man were not quite so far apart, then there will be another pleasure in having written them.

My thanks are due, and are given heartily, to the editors of *The Youth's Companion* for permission to use several sketches that have already appeared, and to Mr. Charles Copeland, the artist, for his care and interest in preparing the illustrations.

WM. J. LONG.

ANDOVER, MASS., June, 1899.



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