

NATURE'S CAROL SINGERS

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Nature's carol singers by Richard Kearton & Cherry Kearton

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RICHARD KEARTON & CHERRY KEARTON

NATURE'S CAROL SINGERS

Natural History Works

By R. KEARTON, F.Z.S.

*With Illustrations from Photography taken almost
from Nature by C. and R. Kearton.*

- Kearton's Nature Pictures
The Adventures of Jack Rabbit
British Birds' Nests
The Adventures of Cock Robin
and His Mate
Wild Nature's Ways
White's Natural History of Selborne
Strange Adventures in Dicky-bird
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Our Bird Friends
With Nature and a Camera
Wild Life at Home
Pictures from Nature. Being 15 choice
Kearton's Photographures in Portfolio.
Birds' Nests, Eggs, and Egg Collect-
ing

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TORONTO AND MELBOURNE.

NATURE'S CAROL SINGERS





A NIGHTINGALE AND ITS MATE.

Nature's Carol Singers

By

Richard Kearton

F.Z.S., F.R.P.S.

Author of "Wild Nature's Ways," "The Adventures of Jack Rabbit,"
etc, etc.

Illustrated with Photographs

Direct from Nature by

Cherry and Richard Kearton

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PREFACE.

*Their plumage dazzles not, but yet can sweeter
strains be heard?*

*Let other feathers vaunt the dyes of deepest rainbow
flush,*

*Give me old England's nightingale, its robin and
its thrush.—Cook.*

DESPITE the fact that we live in a small and thickly populated country, we are singularly rich in song birds, thanks to our numerous old furze-clad commons, game preserves, and a healthy sentiment in the great majority of rich and poor alike towards the wee, feathered carol-singers that make grove and hillside ring with their sweet, happy music.

This little book deals in a concise and popular manner with the appearance, haunts, habits, nests, eggs, songs, and call notes of the winged melodists that breed in various parts of the British Islands. I have endeavoured to describe them in such a way that the reader may be able to identify them for himself or herself in wood and field, and where two species bear a similarity of appearance

or song, to emphasise the points wherein they differ.

The study of our native song birds will be found to contain many delightful curiosities, and to present not a few entertaining problems. For instance, all our first-class melodists, such as the Nightingale, Song Thrush, Blackcap Warbler, Woodlark, and Garden Warbler, are dressed in the most sober of sober colours. Male migrants generally arrive upon our shores before the females, and at once commence to sing and practise all kinds of curious antics in order to attract the attention of their prospective brides when they arrive. Individual birds of the same species vary greatly in the quality of their songs, and nearly all the members of a species sometimes sing better in one part of the country than another. Birds are first-class plagiarists, and not only copy each other's notes, but upon occasion actually improve the quality of the music they borrow. Some of them, such as the Chaffinch, practise their notes thousands of times per day, and a Song Thrush sings as many as sixteen hours out of the twenty-four.

The following questions in regard to the behaviour of some of our feathered