

OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

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Our Feathered Friends by Elizabeth Grinnell & Joseph Grinnell

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**OUR FEATHERED
FRIENDS**



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THE WAX-WING.

OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

BY

ELIZABETH GRINNELL

AND

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS volume really needs little by way of introduction. No one can mistake the evident love for our feathered friends, the kindly assistance that has been given them, and the success of the authors in imparting to others much of that pleasure which they have undoubtedly derived from their studies.

The same recreation lies within the power of all who through inattention and thoughtlessness neglect the almost priceless relief from daily burdens afforded by such pursuits. Every one can learn something of the ways and doings of our little friends, even though he may never write a book or put a pen to paper concerning them.

Knowledge thus acquired is not wasted; it elevates the mind and trains the senses, so that in after life the habits of observing and noting frequently become of great use, and are never a detriment.

Our authors have set forth the wanton destruction of bird life consequent upon the use of feathers and parts of birds to ornament hats. They have in no way misstated; for tens of thousands of birds are annually

offered on the altar of fashion to gratify a cruel and barbarous survival of savage adornment. Yet the male friend of the lady who wears upon her head a gorgeous array of mutilated, misshapen, and dyed birdskins may have done something to assist in a similar destruction of bird life. As a boy perhaps he wantonly deprived some bird of her eggs; and later, when possessed of a gun, he may have shown little discretion or thought when depriving the nestling of a mother or father who alone could feed and protect it. And as a man, too often it may be, he has allowed savage instincts to dominate his acts instead of the knowledge derived from experience and thought.

It lies within the power of many who will read these pages to assist in the distribution of evidence and in the enlightenment of others, to the end that the useless slaughter of birds and the destruction of their eggs may be prevented, or at least greatly mitigated.

Within a few years past efforts have been made to have one day a year in the schools set aside to study and consider the ways and interests of our feathered friends. The matter is of national importance, and deserves the interest that has been taken in it; but without the hearty coöperation of teachers and their efforts to interest and instruct their charges, there is little likelihood of accomplishing the end desired.

Each farmer or occupier of a tract of land has it

within his power to set aside some portion of otherwise non-usable land to afford shelter and concealment for many birds, and to protect those useful species that select and require special locations in which to rear their young. The presence of birds in a locality lends a charm to the landscape which nothing else can lend. An abundance of useful and attractive species may be encouraged to remain and breed if heed is paid to their requirements, and efforts to disturb them in their orderly pursuits be prevented. With slight care such species as are not a detriment or nuisance can be assisted, and thus the value of birds as a feature of the landscape, as insect destroyers, and as vocalists can be more and more demonstrated and appreciated.

There is a book, large and bulky, yet within the reach of every one ; little work is required to handle it, for its pages are always open, and it is written in the universal language. It costs nothing to read many chapters, yet, as in all good things, a little patience and some experience will assist greatly in acquiring a fair understanding of its contents. In this great Book of Nature will be found much concerning that rich and varied division of animal life to which has been given the name of Birds, and its relation to the welfare and enjoyment of humanity.

Certain helps have been invented by the experiences and intelligence of man to assist those who through in-

attention, unfavorable environment, or otherwise, have been unable to acquire that knowledge of this book essential to a correct understanding of their relation to animated nature.

Such a help is this little volume, which it is hoped may prove useful and instructive to many whose knowledge of bird life is small, and also be well worth a reading by those whose more extended opportunities have permitted a wider knowledge of ornithology.

WILLIAM PALMER.

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