

THE BIRDS OF SHAKESPEARE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649755998

The birds of Shakespeare by Sir Archibald Geikie

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE

**THE BIRDS OF
SHAKESPEARE**

THE BIRDS OF SHAKESPEARE

PUBLISHED BY
JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS, GLASGOW
Publishers to the University.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.
New York, - - The Macmillan Co.
Toronto, - - - The Macmillan Co. of Canada.
London, - - - Simpkin, Hamilton and Co.
Cambridge, - - Macmillan and Bowes.
Edinburgh, - - Douglas and Foulis.
Sydney, - - - Angus and Robertson.

MCMXVI.

THE BIRDS OF SHAKESPEARE

BY

SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE, O.M.

K.C.B., D.C.L., F.R.S.

GLASGOW

JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS

PUBLISHERS TO THE UNIVERSITY

1916

PR
3044
G45

6181111
17.5.55

Preface

THE attentive reader of Shakespeare's Poems and Plays can hardly fail to notice the remarkable frequency of the Poet's allusions to Birds, not merely as a great choir of songsters, enlivening the woods and fields with their varied music, but as individual creatures, each endowed with its own special characters. Shakespeare has drawn an assemblage of bird-portraits to which, for extent and variety, no equal is to be found in any other great English poet. Making ample use of what he had himself observed about Birds in their native haunts, and combining this personal knowledge with what he could obtain from literature and from popular fancy or superstition, he has employed the material thus gathered to illustrate, in many an apt simile

Preface

and striking metaphor, his vivid presentation of the great drama of human life. If we compare him in this respect with either the poets who preceded or those who have followed him we learn that he stands apart from them all.

The present little volume was written as a Presidential Address to the Haslemere Natural History Society, and was read to the members on March 9th of the present year. The approach of the Shakespeare Tercentenary having brought the poet and his writings more closely to the mind, it appeared to me not inappropriate that a company of naturalists should be asked to consider how one branch of the subjects in which they are more specially interested had been treated by the greatest poet of all time. The Address was nearly finished when I came, for the first time, upon the excellent and exhaustive *Ornithology of Shakespeare*, by Mr. James Harting, published in 1871. I would gladly have

Preface

availed myself of this volume had I known of it sooner, but I gleaned from it a few quotations which in my search through the Poems and Plays I had missed. My object, however, was somewhat different from that author's. Approaching the subject from the literary rather than the scientific side, I desired to show that Shakespeare's delight in birds and bird-music was not less keen than that of Chaucer and the earlier poets, and at the same time to point out how detailed was his acquaintance with birds, and how wide the range of similitudes which he drew from them to the great enrichment of our literature. I have ventured also to illustrate the change of poetic mood since his time in regard to Nature by citing three poems on Birds by three of the great poets of last century.

The *Cambridge Shakespeare* of W. Aldis Wright is the text from which my citations are made. I have to thank Messrs.