

The Wayside Inn.

I halted at a pleasant inn,
 As I my way was wending—
 A golden apple was the sign,
 From knotty bough depending.
 Mine host—it was an apple tree—
 He smilingly received me,
 And spread his sweetest, choicest fruit
 To strengthen and relieve me.
 Full many a little feathered guest
 Came through his branches springing;
 They hopped and flew from spray to spray,
 Their notes of gladness singing.
 Beneath his shade I laid me down,
 And slumber sweet possessed me;
 The soft wind blowing through the leaves
 With whispers low caressed me.
 And when I rose and would have paid
 My host so open-hearted,
 He only shook his lofty head—
 I blessed him and departed.

—Johann Ludwig Uhland (translation).

Feeding Birds in Winter.

Under the subject of "Feeding Birds in Winter" come two other subjects of even greater interest to the bird lovers, namely, "The Taming of Birds" and "The Changing of Both their Habits and Food."

The winter of 1903-1904, was an exceptionally hard winter for the birds; for this reason I thought it my duty to set a lunch-counter for the feathered tribe. I tacked suet to the trunk of a big black walnut tree that grew fifteen feet from my window, and it was not long before the birds began to patronize it. They seemed to tell all the birds in the neighborhood of their happy discovery, for many birds appeared that I had never seen around the house before this time.

Every day the downy and hairy woodpeckers, red and white-breasted nuthatches, chickadees, brown creepers, and blue jays came to eat the suet, while the juncos and an occasional English sparrow ate crumbs I scattered on the ground. The birds were not the only ones to enjoy the suet; several gray and red squirrels came daily and carried away so much suet that I had to devise a new method for feeding the birds. I put out bread crumbs upon my window-sill, and the chickadees and nuthatches soon learned to come there for them. At first they were afraid of the open window, but they soon learned to eat without fear, while I stood near with the window open.

One cold morning I put some crumbs in my hand, and held it out of the window. A little chickadee

came along, flew nearer and nearer; then came to a wire close to my hand; looked at the crumbs, then at me. After picking my fingers to make sure they were harmless, he hopped into my hand, ate some crumbs, and flew away to tell his mate what a daring little chickadee he was. After this he came daily to my hand, and before long other chickadees and a red-breasted nuthatch followed his example. One day I succeeded in photographing my feathered friend, while eating crumbs from my hand. The nuthatches had a good deal of difficulty in getting to the window-sills. They could not grasp the smooth boards with their claws, neither could they keep their balance on the wire just beyond the sill. I took pity on them and made what I call a moving restaurant for them. I nailed boards together, which I suspended in mid-air by means of a wire. With a string and pulley I can move this from my window to the tree. Here I placed crumbs and water. The nuthatches soon learned to come here very gracefully, and before long they could stand up on their legs as well as any other bird. My nuthatch is now as much a perching bird as a creeping bird.

The next year the brown creepers, juncos, an English sparrow and a downy woodpecker followed the example of the nuthatches and chickadees and came to the restaurant for food. I took several photographs of them.

The woodpeckers eat nothing but suet, while the juncos eat nothing but crumbs and seeds. The birds have a decided preference for doughnut crumbs, although they are very fond of bread crumbs. The brown creeper likes crumbs and suet, while the chickadees and nuthatches, although they will eat everything I give them, like nuts and squash seeds best. I crack the nuts for them and give them shells and all, while I simply break the squash seeds in two.

I shall continue my study of feeding and taming the birds this winter, and hope to discover many other new facts about them.

I advise the reader of *Bird-Lore* to set a table for the birds this coming winter, and to watch their habits closely. It is surprising how the birds will appear in a neighborhood where there were no birds, when they find food and protection there.

I begin to feed the birds the last of October, and keep it up regularly until the middle of April. The birds will not come to any artificial lunch-counter when they can get their natural food.—Samuel D. Robbins, Belmont, Mass., in *Bird-Lore*.