

MY BIRDS AND HOW THEY CAME TO ME.

It was my good fortune to spend the coldest week of this winter in a small New Hampshire town on the bank of the Connecticut River. The thermometer stood at 25° at breakfast time; the days were sunny, the air was still, and the moon at the full; all this with an unbroken level of fresh snow made winter a delight to one "who likes that kind of thing."

Sparrows were not to be seen at our end of the town, but chickadees, white-breasted nuthatches, pine grosbeaks and downy and hairy woodpeckers were more or less common visitors. A sheltered corner of the verandah had been wired in below by way of protection from cats and in this corner was a large wooden trough filled with dried sun-flowers, while suet hung from the trees and shrubs near by. To the sun-flowers came flocks of chickadees, with an occasional nuthatch, in and out the live-long day. I watched them with delight and came home to try my hand at feeding birds in Cambridge.

On the south side of the house stands a willow-tree whose long boughs reach out in all directions, making in summer a forest of green, where birds of various kinds find camping ground. There have been crows, robins, grackles, rose-breasted grosbeaks, pine grosbeaks, white-breasted nuthatches, chickadees, brown creepers, flickers, downy woodpeckers, humming birds, song sparrows, chipping sparrows, redstarts, cedar birds, vireos, summer yellowbirds, orioles, blue jays, golden-crowned kinglets, goldfinches, cuckoos, and once—A day to be remembered!—one of the maids came breathless to my door.

"Please, Miss, John wants you to look out of the window to see a bird."

"What is it, John?" I said.

"Well, it was the reddest bird I ever seen. I was watering the purple beech and he came and bathed in the pool; but now he's gone."

"Don't you think it was a robin?" I asked in exact imitation of my own Bird-man, who generally calls all my new birds English sparrows.

"Robin?" repeated John, "Well, no, it wasn't a robin. As if