

PREFACE.

So many good and useful books about birds have been written and published, that the author of a new book should present an explanation for its appearance.

My explanation is that no book has been issued that entirely suits the purpose for which the present volume is intended—a book that can be sold at a low price, and that will give accurate information about the habits and distribution of Canadian birds, as well as descriptions of their plumage, and give this information in untechnical terms. In other words, there is a demand for a small, cheap book, treating of our birds in a popular style. This demand comes from the general public, but comes especially from Teachers who ask for a book that can be used as a supplementary Reader, to assist them in interesting their pupils in birds and familiarizing them with the species most frequently met with in country rambles.

I have attempted to meet this demand, but feel constrained to warn readers against expecting too much from a work that is cramped by such limitations. The space is too small to contain even a short history of all the birds found in the Dominion, for there are too many, over 550 species. The birds of one Province alone are too numerous for a book of this size. Mr. McIlwraith, in his "Birds of Ontario," enumerates 317 species, and about 300 species have been found in New Brunswick. These figures include, of course, the very rare birds, and those that are merely "accidental stragglers," but with these left out the number is still too large for a small book.