

WHAT YOU SEE WHEN YOU GO OUT WITHOUT
YOUR GUN.

BY W. A. D. LEES,

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When I was asked to read you a paper on the birds, I felt that I was very unfit for the task, never having had any more than a nodding acquaintance with the science of Ornithology, and having only begun a year ago to observe the birds with any degree of care. Still I could not make up my mind to lose the chance of telling you some of my first year's experiences so that you might be made aware how much wholesome enjoyment may be got from the study of birds, by any one who is willing to use his eyes and his ears, even though he be entirely without technical knowledge. And even here I feel that I shall fail, for no words of mine can adequately express the many and varied delights of a bird-hunt such as I was fortunate enough, almost weekly, last year, to share the enjoyment of with Mr. N. F. Ballantyne, a fellow-member of this Club, and such as I shall do my best to give you a brief outline sketch of. But before I begin, I should like to advise anyone who intends making a closer acquaintance with the birds, if possible to induce a friend to become his fellow-student. One will be enough, for the birds do not care to receive too many visitors at a time, but if this one be thoroughly in sympathy with you and with the birds, you will find that this arrangement will not only add a hundredfold to the charm of the work, (if such it may be called) but will be practically useful as well, for, apart from the pleasure of sharing newly acquired knowledge with one interested in the same subject, many cases of doubt arise in the identification of birds, where two heads are better than one. Even if you do get into a rather heated discussion, now and then, as to whether a given bird is a Bald Eagle or a Blackburnian Warbler, a Saw-whet Owl or a Wilson's Thrush, neither of you will be likely to carry away any very serious wounds from the fray, and each will determine to make sure of his bird next time.