

Birds of Eastern Canada.

INTRODUCTION.

OBJECT OF THE BOOK.

Of late years there has been a great awakening of interest in the subject of natural history. More and more people are beginning to realize the pleasure and profit that can be derived from observation of common natural objects. In this growing field of nature study, few subjects have attracted so much popular attention as birds and few forms of life appeal so strongly to the æsthetic sense. They are beautiful; they arouse curiosity; their elusiveness piques the imagination; and by presenting constantly new aspects they never become commonplace.

The ornithological side is one from which the problems of nature can be successfully attacked from so many standpoints and in so many ways that there is interesting and valuable work for all to accomplish according to individual taste or opportunity. Those who incline towards systematic work can split their definitions as finely as human powers of observation permit. The animal psychologist can develop his problems as far as ingenuity can devise methods for experimentation. The ordinary nature lover can observe and note as painstakingly as opportunity permits; he can record information of scientific as well as popular interest, take pleasure in observing passing beauties, train his powers of observation, and acquire a knowledge that greatly increases his capacity for appreciation of nature. Even the unsentimental, practical man, who has little outward sympathy with abstract beauty, has his attention attracted by the evident economic value of birds.

The "Birds of Eastern Canada" has been written to awaken and, where it already exists, to stimulate an interest, both æsthetic and practical, in the study of Canadian birds and to suggest the sentimental, scientific, and economic value, of that study; to assist in the identification of native species; and to furnish the economist with a ready means of determining bird friend from bird foe that he may act intelligently towards them and to the best interest of himself and the country at large; to present in a readily accessible form reliable data upon which measures of protective legislation may be based; to point out some of the pitfalls that have caught the inexperienced in the past; and to suggest methods for their future avoidance.

SCOPE OF THE BOOK.

This work covers all the birds that the ordinary observer is likely to meet with between the Atlantic coast and the prairies north of the International Boundary. This region forms a natural zoological area (see Distribution, page 8), including what may be called the eastern woodlands of Canada, a fairly homogeneous section, physically, geographically, and zoologically. The prairies are radically different in character and, consequently, exhibit an entirely different aspect of bird life. The birds of