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'Birds have been to me the solace, the recreation, the passion of a lifetime.' So wrote Reginald Bosworth Smith (1839–1908), former Classics master at Harrow School. As a young man, he published his first book on birds while teaching at Oxford, and he continued to combine his lifelong love of birds with classical and literary teaching and research. He retired to a country house in Dorset and in 1905 published this book, based on a series of articles written in his retirement. Recording his own observations, some of many years before, and peppered with scholarly references to birds in literature, the essays cover individual birds such as the owl, the raven and the magpie, as well as bird-watching in Dorset and beyond. Imparting a love and respect for wildlife that remains inspiring, this book will be of great interest to the bird-lover and scholar of today.

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