

the cold. They then crowd close in shivering flocks of fifty or more, and come and feed on hay stacks and on the seeds of goosefoot, polygonum, and other weeds about the gardens. I have seen the hunger driven flock settle on loads of hay exposed for sale in the city market. Yellow birches are our only deciduous forest trees which carry a quantity of seeds through the winter, and it is this circumstance which makes them so important for the support of the winter flocks.

The Goldfinches leave the last of October, the last individuals evidently suffering during cold storms, and their place in winter is taken by a few wild, bounding Pine Goldfinches, whose slim voices sound sweet notes round the dark spires of ancient spruces where the White-winged Crossbills feed. We sometimes have large flocks of Red Crossbills, but their coming is very uncertain. They were in force in December, 1877, and in January, 1884. Spruce seeds were abundant both these seasons. •

Pine Grosbeaks come in November, but their numbers are uncertain. When coniferous seeds are plenty, flocks of fifty bright-plumed beauties with their gentle, unsuspecting, wilderness-ways and soft voices, come frequently about the spruce groves. But when these are scarce, as they are this season, it is rare to hear the call of a solitary wanderer in the most unfrequented forest scene. But Grosbeaks are not dependent alone on a precarious supply of cone-borne seeds for a living. They feed much on the buds of the trees, and will even go to the shores for a meal, like Buntings and Robins.

In midwinter they retire to the shelter of the deep, coniferous forests. On a sunny morning, when the fir drapery flashes with crystals, the group of forest wayfarers may be found in their sheltered home, keeping each other company with quiet flocking calls, a male constantly breaking into a delightful Linnet-like song, with some peculiarly rich flute notes of his own. In such circumstances they do not mount the blast-swept summits of the trees but content themselves with foraging on the lower sheltered boughs.

All these winter visitants, except Snow Buntings, are irregular and uncertain in their appearance here. During mild seasons we have them in numbers, but cold and stormy winters drive them to districts where food is more easily obtained. But Grosbeaks and Crossbills are never in numbers unless coniferous seeds are abundant.