

SKETCHES OF CANADIAN WILD BIRDS.

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In presenting these sketches to the public, my object is two-fold. In the first place, I am desirous of directing attention to Canadian Ornithology; and in the second place, to supply to a certain extent, a vacancy in this neglected branch of Canadian Natural History. I may premise that the subject here treated of has ever been with me a favourite study.

From early childhood, I have listened with delight to the many solos of our feathered songsters, and beheld with admiration their little arts, and the beautiful plumage which adorns many of the winged tribes which yearly visit or permanently remain in the country. The study has afforded me much real pleasure and cheered many a weary hour, which otherwise, might have been uselessly spent.

I have, when opportunity served, taken notes of the various habits of our feathered friends, and often during the cold and long winter evenings, my leisure hours have found ample employment in adding to and revising the work of the past, with the hope that the youthful reader may derive pleasure and profit from its perusal. It may also be the means of interesting them in the study of the beautiful and instructive science of *Ornithology*.

As far as my knowledge extends, this branch of science is almost wholly neglected by *Canadian* writers; every other subject receives some share of attention; but no pen has recorded the simple annals of our field and forest birds and placed their names on the pages of history. Year after year, they come and go with scarcely a passing notice from men whose senses of sight and hearing they were created to delight. This is not the case in other countries; the birds of the *United States*, have been described by *Wilson*, *Audubon*, and others. *Sweden* has had her *Linnaeus*, *France* her *Cuvier*, and *Britain* a host of *Ornithological* writers. Is it because the birds of Canada have no musical powers to charm the lovers of natural melody? Or are they clothed in such homely garbs, that they cease to attract the eye of the beholder, and are therefore, unworthy the attention of the student of nature? Or are their services so small to man that they may easily be dispensed with? None of these charges, though they may be brought against our birds, have any foundation in fact. In confirmation of this statement, I will quote part of an article on the song of birds of Canada, the only article I have ever seen on this subject, from the pen of a *Canadian* writer, previous to my *Sketches on Our Winter Birds*. The writer says:—

“We hear people remark that we have no singing-birds in Canada; or that they do not sing like those in *Europe*; the majority of such persons have never endeavoured to ascertain what constitutes good singers, and what does not, and if they had they would be prejudiced in favour of their own country's birds, which is nat-