

PREFACE.

THE object of this Catalogue is to bring together the names of all the birds that have been discovered within the boundaries of the Dominion, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, and north to the Arctic; to present these in the system of nomenclature and in the sequence now generally adopted by American Ornithologists, and to give the geographical distribution of each species.

This latter portion of the work has not been accomplished very satisfactorily, for, although considerable labor and care have been devoted to the preparation of the notes on distribution, they are not at all complete, and I fear that, on further investigation, some of them will be proven incorrect. There is no way at present of avoiding these defects. All the information that is now obtainable has been procured; the works of the older authors have been freely drawn upon, as well as those of recent writers, and a number of MSS. reports have been prepared expressly for the present work. But the greater portion of the country—immense stretches of forest and prairie and sea coast—have received little attention from Ornithologists, while even the more settled districts have not yet been fully investigated, leaving a large amount of field-work still to be done before anything like a complete account of the Birds of Canada can be produced.

I am quite aware that this opinion regarding the narrow limits of our knowledge of Canadian birds is opposed to that held by some of the leading scientific men of the Dominion, who consider that all that can be learned about our fauna is now known to science. That these gentlemen have held such a view has been unfortunate for Canadian ornithology, for it has led them to take little interest in the investigations that were being made, and to withhold all encouragement from students of the science; and as this indifference of our leaders in scientific affairs