

T. Here is the male bird; describe its color.

S. Its head, a part of the back and all its breast is a bright rosy-red nearly.

T. The wings and tail?

S. Are blackish, with whitish edgings on the most of the feathers.

T. Here is the female. How does it differ?

S. It has a sort of an olive, ashy grey color where the male has a bright red.

T. When you find them here in winter where would you expect them to breed?

S. Somewhere further north in summertime. What kind of nests have they?

T. They say they are made of small twigs and rootlets, lined with finer fibres of grasses and the like. Eggs (generally four) pale greenish, blue spotted and blotched with dark brown markings and lilac shell spots. The egg is about an inch long and three-quarters of an inch thick. But let us look at the strong, conical bill. This stout, conical bill is more or less like the bills of the finches, buntings and sparrows, and is well adapted for crushing small seeds.

S. Is there a name for that kind of bill?

T. Yes. *Conirostral*, which means cone-billed. You can also notice that the line between the upper and lower half of the bill is not straight. It is turned downwards near the corner of the mouth. The conirostral birds, although very merry, are all more or less "down in the mouth," literally. What do you notice about the feet?

S. Three toes in front and one behind grasping the limb on which it is perched.

T. Yes; it may be called a "Percher." The bare part of the leg, just above the toes, is called the *tarsus* in all birds. Notice its plated covering.

S. What are "Perchers"? Do not all birds perch?

T. The structure of the feet of some, you observe, are better fitted for grasping a perch than others. In the case of our specimen the adaptation is very perfect; and all such birds we shall put into a class or *order*, as it is called, the "Perchers" proper.

S. How many *orders* of birds are there in Canada?

T. Fifteen. The fifteen *orders* are also represented in Nova Scotia.

S. How many different kinds of birds are in Canada and in Nova Scotia?

T. In all Canada a few over 550. In Nova Scotia alone about 240.

S. How many of these belong to the order "Perchers?"

T. In Canada, about 230; in Nova Scotia alone, about 90.

S. The "Perchers" must be a very large order, for it contains more than one-third of all the different kinds?

T. True. And they are divided into two sub-orders, the "songless perchers" and the "song perchers." There are only about a half a dozen of the former, while there are over eighty of the latter known in Nova Scotia. To which does the pine grosbeak belong?

S. To the song perchers. How many Nova Scotia song perchers belong to the conirostral family?

T. About two dozen. The family is known as the *Fringillidae*, and includes the finches, cross-bills, redpoll, snow bunting and sparrows, as well as the grosbeaks. At least a dozen of the *fringillidae* are so common in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, that every school boy should know them by their proper names.

We shall take the American robin for our next lesson. It belongs to another family of the song perchers.

Plants in their Homes and in the School Room.

No. 1. Methods Observations Records.

By all means begin the study of plants this month, and let the following plans, among others that the practical teacher will readily make for himself, be carried out:

First. Let every pupil have before him a specimen of the plant or plant part that is the subject of the day's lesson.

Second. All pupils, whether of the lower or higher grades, should be taught to examine the specimens and record their observations in notes, to be carefully written out afterwards with the specimens before them. They should be encouraged to make drawings of the objects, and to find out and record upon more minute examination after the lesson additional particulars to those brought out in class. Encourage them to ask questions, but be careful not to tell them what they should find out by careful trial. A discovery made by themselves will encourage them to search, and will tend to form the habit of closer observation.

Third. Let the pupils make a collection of the plants in their neighborhood, to be kept in the school room, which may be added to by future classes in the following years, and which in the end will be a thoroughly representative collection of the plants of the neighborhood. Read what is said on the subject of local museums in the December number of the REVIEW. Let there be a generous emulation in school districts to begin such a collection this spring, and record the results in the REVIEW for December, 1889.

But it may be said in regard to the first plan proposed above, there are no specimens obtainable now while the snow is on the ground. Are there not? Lift up your eyes! If the fields are not already green