

Than rings thro' sea-mists chill and dark,
 This name of welcome and of warning.
 Not happier to his cell may go
 The saint, triumphant o'er temptation,
 Than the worn captain turns below,
 Relieved, as by a revelation.

How blest when Cabot ventured o'er
 This nothern sea, yon rocks rose gleaming;
 A promise land seemed Labrador
 (Nor was the promise all in seeming);
 Strong sea-wall, still it stands to guard
 An Inland, fertile, fair as any,
 The rich—but the unresaped—reward
 Of Cabot and of Verrazzani.

All hail! old *Prima Vista*—long
 As break the billows on thy boulders,
 Will seamen hail thy lights with song,
 And home-hopes quicken all beholders.
 Long as thy headlands point the way
 Between man's old and new creation,
 Evil fall from thee like the spray,
 And Hope illumine every station.

Long may the hardy sons count o'er
 The spoils of Ocean, won by labor;
 Long may the free, unbolted door
 Be open to each trusty neighbor.
 Long, long, may blossom on thy rocks
 Thy sea-pinks, fragrant as the heather,
 Thy maidens of the flowing locks,
 Safe sheltered from life's stormy weather.

Proudly, oh! *Prima Vista*, still—
 Where sweeps the sea-hawk's fearless pinion—
 Do thou unfurl from every hill
 The banner of the New Dominion.
 Proudly, to all who sail the sea,
 Bear thou advanced the Union standard—
 And friendly may its welcome be
 To all men—seaward bound, or landward!

IV. Papers on Natural History.

THE BIRDS OF SPRING.

From an interesting letter in the *Leader* on this subject we quote the following:—As spring has come and the summer birds are beginning to arrive, a few observations on them may not be unacceptable to your readers, the more so as Canadian ornithology seems to be little studied amongst us. During our long winter but few birds are found in the forest, but we observe occasionally the red-bellied uthatch (*Sitta Canadensis*); the hairy woodpecker (*Picus villosus*); the downy woodpecker (*Picus pubescens*), with a few others. Those curious birds the crossbills, (*Leucopseera carvisostris*) sometimes pay us a visit during winter, but they are more common in Lower than Upper Canada. There are two species of these birds, the common and the white-winged, the latter much the rarest. Their mandibles cross each other like a pair of scissors; a wonderful arrangement, and admirably adapted for excavating the hard fir cones which these birds are fond of doing. Those beautiful birds, the Cardinal grosbeaks (*Loxia cardinatis*), are also occasional visitants in hard weather, the rich crimson livery of the males forming a striking contrast to the dazzling whiteness of the snow over which they flit. The Pine grosbeak (*Loxia Enucleator*), is a plainer and more abundant species. Who has not seen the snow bunting (*Emberiza nivalis*), as they skim over the frozen fields in large flocks, in their beautiful winter dress of black and white. They usually arrive with the first driving fall of snow. Thus it will be seen that we are not quite destitute of birds in winter, despite the bleak aspect of our country at that season, and there are several more winter birds besides those already enumerated, viz., the lapland bunting, the shore lark, the Bohemian wax-wing, &c. This last is a beautiful species, and comes to us from the North. It is of an exquisite fawn color, has an elegant crest, and five or seven curious appendages to the wing, very like bits of red sealing-wax. So much for our winter guests. With the return of spring numerous feathered friends come to us from the Southern States of America. The crow is usually the first arrival, and the robin (*Turdus migratorius*) is close on his heels. Why this last bird is called a robin, we are at a loss to discover, since it bears no resemblance to its congener of Great Britain, and is in fact a veritable thrush. The title seems to us a

sad misnomer. The gold-crested wren and the fire-crested wren also arrive early in March, and are to be found chiefly in fir plantations, where their presence may be detected by their low sweet note. Though very similar to, they differ a little from their brethren of Great Britain, and remain with us but a short time passing on to the North. Most of us have noticed a dark colored bird, feasting sometimes between the legs of sheep, and sometimes among cattle, and feeding busily on the worms and grubs disturbed by the movements of these animals. That is the cow bird, and its habits are analogous in one respect, to those of our English cuckoo, viz.: it does not build a nest, but deposits its eggs in the homes of other birds. Yonder handsome stranger robed in black and orange flitting about among those gooseberry bushes, is the Baltimore Oriole, and his dress would compare favorably with some of the gorgeous denizens of the forests of South America. That smaller bird, also, dressed in black and orange, and looking exactly like a miniature of the Baltimore is the American Redstart. He is a lively little fellow, though rather shy, and affects the most secluded parts of the forest, where he can feed and sing unseen. But what was that scarlet flash amid the deep green of those lofty trees! That was the glorious scarlet tanager "*Tanagra rubra*," one of the most beautiful summer visitants we have, and not very abundant in Canada, though they occasionally resort to gardens in the vicinity of towns, for the purpose of feasting on the buds of fruit trees. Another species, very like this bird, but lacking the black wing, is the summer Red bird "*Tanagra Closiva*," an inhabitant of the Southern States of America. In clover fields during May and June we see the sprightly bob i-link spring into the air, singing merrily all the while. This bird has a chastely colored dress of black and white, and from its habits of singing on the wing, has been called the Canadian Sky-lark. The Blue-jay of Canada is very like its British congener, though smaller, and perhaps less handsome on the whole. It is a shy bird, and avoids the presence of man. The Canada taw is a much rarer species, and far more soberly colored. Again, who has not heard, in his rambles through some dense wood, a cry precisely similar to that of a cat, and been often doubtless much puzzled thereat? That is the voice of the cat-bird. "*Turdus felix*," a small and very plain bird, far oftener heard than seen, though tolerably abundant in most parts. Another harsh note is that of the yellow billed American cuckoo, so very unlike the familiar cry of the bird in England, that we can hardly persuade ourselves that it is a cuckoo at all. The black-billed cuckoo much resembles the preceding, the chief distinction being, as the names imply, in the color of the bills. These birds are local in distribution, and usually avoid the vicinity of man, though we have met with them very near Toronto. That loud shrill note, which often startles us in our woodland rambles in summer, proceeds from the great crested Fly catcher (*Muscicapa*——?), a good-sized bird, with a yellowish breast, and fine crest. They love the tops of lofty trees, whence they dart into the air every few minutes, in pursuit of insects, always returning to their former perch. Very simple are the habits of the tyrant flycatcher, or king bird ("*Muscicapa Tyrannus*") with flame colored crest and sprightly bearing. During the breeding season nothing can exceed the pugnacity of this bird, and he will not hesitate at that time to attack hawks or jay, or any other bird, though thrice his size, who may venture too near his nest. In the vicinity of small creeks, especially those bordered with the oak and elm, is found the indigo bird with his coat of cerulean blue. This is not by any means a common species, at least in Upper Canada, though much sought after by collectors for its rich plumage. It loves the tops of lofty trees, and its song bears some resemblance to that of the yellow bird ("*Fringilla Triolis*,") though sweeter and more shrill. The well known blue bird with its clear, sweet song, one of our earliest arrivals, may be sometimes taken for the indigo bird by an inexperienced eye, though larger and possessing a reddish dress, which the other does not. Passing over the varieties of the owl and hawk tribe, and ("*Picidae*") we come to the group of Warblers, of which we have over forty species. These birds are all small, have more or less yellow and green about their dress, and delight chiefly in the cedar swamps. Among the rarest are the hemlock, the morning, the Cape may, the golden-winged, &c., and among the handsomest are the black and yellow ("*Sylvia Magnolia*,") the cerulean, the blackbambian, the black-throated green warbler, &c.

Statutory Holidays by the Interpretation Act for Ontario. Section 13.

"The word 'holiday' shall include Sundays, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, and Christmas Day, the days appointed for the celebration of the birth-day of Her Majesty, and any day appointed by Proclamation for a General Fast or Thanksgiving."