

Among the ferns gathered are the Christmas fern which is just opening out its pale green bristly fronds; the Marginal shield-fern; the delicate Beech-fern, and the graceful three-divided Oak-fern.

The Maples are represented by two species which never become trees, and are not seen in the city. They prefer the moist shady hillsides near streams. These are the Moosewood, *Acer pennsylvanicum*, which has a very large leaf for our woods, and drooping greenish racemes; and the Mountain Maple, *A. spicatum*, which has upright racemes while in flower, but they become drooping in fruit."

Following, Mr. Criddle spoke on the birds observed, which included the Black-billed Cuckoo, pointing out that this species is chiefly distinguishable from the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, both of which are found in Eastern Canada, by the colour of the bill, as their names imply; and that both build nests and rear their young, thus differing from the Old World species which lay their eggs in the nests of other birds*; the Ruby-throated Hummingbird; the Phoebe, whose plaintive cry was heard; the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, mentioning that the male bird is of a brilliant black and white with a rose coloured breast, whilst the female is dull coloured and is therefore protected as she sits on her nest unseen by enemies; the Red-eyed Vireo; the Black-and-White Warbler; the Yellow Warbler; the Oven-bird, commenting on

*Whilst it is true, as Mr. Criddle says, that our two species of Cuckoo build nests and rear their young, still there are cases on record where they have followed the habit of their congener, the European Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*, and our own Cow-bird, *Molothrus ater*, by laying their eggs in the nests of other birds; such as in those of the robin, cat-bird, mourning-dove, and others. Furthermore, the black-billed cuckoo sometimes lays eggs in the nest of the yellow-billed cuckoo and *vice versa*. There seems indeed to be an erratic trait in the whole group of the cuckoos which number some two hundred species of wide distribution, in the manner of their domestic proclivities. The nests of some are rudely built, whilst others are of slender structure; and a nest may contain at the same time eggs in various stages of incubation and hatched out young ones. Owing to such irregular oviposition, it may not be wondered at that the instinct of the bird might lead her sometimes to drop an egg in the nest of some other bird, as by so doing a purpose may be served to the young bird in being reared in a nest where the depositing of the full complement of eggs is attended by the regularity usual among birds. An interesting instance of the domestic deviations of the cuckoos is that of the Ani, *Crotophaga ani*, a bird of South America and the West Indies. It is said that a number of those birds form a community among themselves and construct a huge nest in which the females in common lay their eggs, which number as many as fourteen or more. Altogether the cuckoos as a group appear to be very erratic and eccentric in their manners of nest-building or non-nest-building, as well as in their habits of depositing their eggs, or in attending to the wants of their young.