

is less than that of the Redpoll. These birds may be seen in the coldest days of our winters, generally in small flocks, in groves of cone-bearing trees, and flying from grove to grove in crowded flight, with a twittering, rattling note.

SNOWFLAKE.

The Snowflake, Snowbunting or Snowbird, as it is commonly known among us, scarcely needs a description for those who live in the country, though it is not so common now as it was thirty or forty years ago when large flocks were often seen moving in restless, swirling flight over the snow-clad fields, seeking the seeds of plants wherever the weeds peered above the drifts of frost-formed snowflakes. Offspring of Arctic Nature, with swift wing it traverses regions where man, boastful of the aids of Science and Art, and eager in the pursuit of empire, wealth and glory, has been unable to penetrate. The spring plumage is pure white; the back, wings and tail variegated with black. In this plumage we do not see it—it is then in its distant northern home. When it visits us, the white is clouded with light brown. It is smaller than any of the Grosbeaks, and longer or larger than the other birds mentioned here.

A few sentences from Nelson's "Birds of Alaska" telling how he found this interesting bird in its home, may be appreciated by readers who are not accustomed to see the Snowbird.

"The Snowbird is a summer bird in all the circum-polar regions, and none of the various Arctic expeditions have extended their explorations beyond the points where this handsome species is found. About Plover Bay, on the high mountains rising abruptly from the water, I found it common and breeding, the last of June, 1881, and on June 24th, the same season, it was also found in fine breeding plumage at the south-west Cape of St. Lawrence Island, where we landed from the "Corwin." Their note was different from any I ever heard them utter during their winter visit to the south, and was one of protest or alarm, as shown by the uneasiness of the birds as they flitted overhead. We suspected they were nesting from their movements, and asked three or four native children, who ran to meet us, if they knew where the birds had their eggs. Just back of the huts, about 100 yards distant on the hillside, and sheltered by a slight tussock, was placed a warm, closely-made structure of fine grass stems, interwoven throughout with feathers and cottony seed-tops of plants."