

hives, it would be well to watch closely before shooting the birds, as they are too valuable to be wantonly destroyed, and in all cases an examination of the stomach contents should be made, and the information gained should be reported.

There is scarcely a farm in the country that has not one or more pairs of Phoebe birds nesting in or about the buildings, and I fancy there are not many bridges of any size under which a nest may not be found; and so I hope it may continue, for the Phoebe is a most useful and friendly little bird. It has all the good traits of the family without being too aggressive, and no suspicion of any act which is in the least injurious attaches to it. If the birds and their nests are left unmolested, they will return year after year to their old home, and as none of our feathered friends are more valuable than they, we should give them every encouragement to do so.

I have particularly mentioned the King bird and Phoebe because they may be regarded as typical of the whole family to which they belong, and being familiar in their habits, they are likely to be well known to everyone. All the other species are more or less birds of the woods and orchards, but each one of them in its own chosen locality is rendering us good service the whole summer through.

SPARROWS, FINCHES, Etc.

This is a very large family represented in Ontario by thirty-four species. Want of space prohibits my calling attention to the food habits of each of these species in detail. It will, however, be sufficient for the purpose of this paper to refer particularly only to those which in some manner are specially beneficial or injurious to the crops usually cultivated for profit. All these birds are insect eaters in the summer months, and their young while in the nest are fed entirely on insects; but in the autumn, winter and early spring, the mature birds subsist principally on the seeds of wild plants and forest trees.

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is one of the largest and most beautiful of the family, and is of more than usual interest because it is one of the very few birds that will eat the Colorado potato beetle and its larvæ, and also the larvæ of the Tussock moth, this last being a hairy caterpillar, very destructive to almost all shade and orchard trees. A specimen of this bird in my possession eats both these insects readily. Unfortunately, these Grosbeaks are of a retiring disposition, and usually resort to the seclusion of the woods, but it is one of the few species that seems to be increasing in Ontario, and if unmolested it may possibly become more familiar in its habits. If so, its services in lessening the number of Tussock moths would be of great value. None of the native members of this family are addicted to eating the ordinary grain or fruit crops, but the Purple Finch (the adult male of this species is crimson, not purple) in the spring is sometimes injurious in orchards and gardens, where it destroys the buds of fruit trees. They will also devour great quantities of sunflowers and other seeds. They are not, however, generally sufficiently numerous to cause much loss.

A member of this family about which there has been much controversy, is the imported European House Sparrow. This bird was introduced into Ontario about the year 1873 by some gentlemen who no doubt were under the impression that the sparrows would devote themselves exclusively to killing and eating the caterpillars that infest the shade trees in our towns. They either forgot or did not know that the sparrow belongs to a class of birds whose diet consists of