

The same cause has led to considerable confusion among our short winged summer birds, these arriving among us about the end of the first week in May in their full summer plumage, and uttering their characteristic notes are easily identified, but when they return again from the north in September, accompanied by their young, the change they have undergone is so great that no one unacquainted with the subject would be able to recognize them. As an instance of this I will only mention the male of the Scarlet Tanager, whose brilliant plumage, so conspicuous in the woods during the summer months, as soon as the breeding season is over, becomes like that of the female, a plain dull green; it is not then surprising that the earlier writers should have frequently described the same species twice under a different name, indeed, in the absence of information from those who had opportunities of observing the birds while the changes were progressing, we do not see how it could have been otherwise.

Wilson no doubt felt these difficulties keenly, when commencing his great work on American birds, and seems, in his writings, to long for the opportunity of solving his doubts by personal observation. When describing the Black-throated Blue wood-warbler, which belongs to the migratory class referred to, he takes occasion to reproach the Canadian people for their want of interest in these subjects; he says, "I know little of this bird, it is one of those transient visitors which in the month of April pass through Pennsylvania on their way to the north; it is highly probable that they breed in Canada, but the summer residents among the feathered tribes, on that part of the Continent, are little known or attended to; the habits of the deer, the bear, and the beaver, are much more interesting to these good people, and for a good substantial reason too, because more lucrative, and unless there should arrive from England an order for a cargo of skins of warblers and flycatchers sufficient to make them an object worth speculation, we are likely to know as little of them hereafter as at present." Without doubting the truth of Wilson's remarks at the time they were written, I am satisfied that they no longer hold true, as there are now many people in Canada, devoting both time and means, in acquiring the information he so much desired, and there are, in some of our Canadian Cities, collections which would have been of great service to him when arranging the material for the American ornithology. When estimating the amount of Wilson's labors in this field of science, we should never overlook the peculiar difficulties