

long migrations to distant lands stimulate our imaginations.

Some of the waders and phalaropes breed in northern Labrador and winter in Patagonia, going a hundred degrees of latitude, fall and spring; and tempt us to inquire what are the causes of those wonderful periodic movements; and, finally, the endless modifications of form and habits by which they are enabled to live under most diverse conditions of food and climate—on land and at sea—invite the student of nature into fields inexhaustible of pleasurable research.

#### *Minor Notes on Natural History*

I have lately obtained a black specimen of the common Red Squirrel. It was killed at Letang, New Brunswick, where neither the Gray nor the common Black squirrel are known to occur.—*American Naturalist*, volume 1, page 53.

How does it happen that we find the Black Guillemot, *Uria grylle* (Lath.) in full black plumage all winter? All our works on Natural History tell us they change to white or gray in winter, but I often get specimens which are black in mid-winter. May it not be that only the young are light in winter? I can hardly think it possible some would remain black and others change; I can see no difference between my dark winter and summer specimens.—*American Naturalist*, volume 1, page 53.

A correspondent of the *American Naturalist* inquired in the number for November, 1867: "Can you inform me what is the use of the comb-like formation on the inside of the middle claw of the Night-heron, the Night-hawk and Whippoorwill? Is it peculiar to night-birds?" This inquiry was referred to Dr. T. M. Brewer who referred it to Mr. Boardman, who writes that Mr. Boardman answered it in a very satisfactory manner. The peculiar "formation," says Mr. Boardman, is used by the birds to clean their heads and such portions of their neck, back, etc., as they cannot