

- two or three were lively birds. However, there were several broods the same season—at least two. About Christmas we counted about twenty birds.

This colony of sparrows has now wintered two seasons in Quebec; this year is the third winter. There are probably about three hundred sparrows. These birds are of course well acclimatized; they are acquainted not only with the town, but they have made satisfactory relations with the citizens, who take a pleasure and pride in providing them with food, as well as in protecting them from injury. I hope this colony will supply the neighbouring orchards with a supply of birds to meet the ravages of the various insects that have made a complete wreck and ruin of our fruit trees.

I do occasionally hear it mentioned that sparrows are injurious to wheat crops. These crops are, however, grown at a remote distance from buildings, and as the grain is only exposed in its ripe state to the ravage of birds for a short period, and that at a season of the year when there is an abundance of every kind of food, I imagine the scandal may be called a prejudice; at any rate, suppose a sparrow can get at wheat for two weeks of the year, he certainly cannot for fifty weeks, when he is probably doing good to mankind. I can answer for it, if a grasshopper appears on a Quebec wharf he is soon connected with sparrow meat.

In the month of May I gave freedom to twenty starlings, eight blackbirds and four thrushes.

The starlings are useful birds in cattle pastures, actually feeding on the backs of cattle, on the wurmals, thus removing a grub which causes both irritation and sores to the animal. As a starling breeds in towns, I thought it likely to be a useful bird in Canada. These birds, being strong on the wing, flew up in the air and gradually disappeared. They have not been seen since.

The blackbirds and thrushes remained about the house for a few weeks, singing before daybreak in the morning and at sunset at night. As the blackbirds had three hens in their lot, I have no doubt they have bred, but for some time past we have seen nothing of them. The same may be said of the thrushes.

The whole of these birds, including the sparrows, were wild birds in England. They cost, at Quebec, about \$1.50 a head; these experiments, therefore, if not entirely successful, have not been very expensive.

I have gone into the above details because I am constantly applied to for this information from persons who are fond of birds, and from others who believe that the great increase of noxious insects may fairly be attributed to the exterminating war which has wantonly been waged upon our insect-eating birds; and expect the evil to increase unless these little friends of the farmer are protected or left undisturbed to multiply, and follow their natural habits. I want to meet the increase of European insects with birds who adapt themselves to the circumstances that surround them, and who rather benefit by the industry of man than otherwise.

Sparrows and Blackbirds ought to remain with us all the year round. Starlings and thrushes will migrate. The whole subject is, however, very interesting. In time we shall probably have our societies like they have in Switzerland for the protection of birds beneficial to agriculture; we shall have our poles with artificial birds' nests. This fashion is already very general, so far as swallows are concerned; but when the subject is once well understood I hope many varieties of birds may find their homes in Canada, and that we may meet the vast increase of insects by a similar increase of both domestic as well as wild birds.

The protection of little birds is a popular subject in this part of Canada.

SILLERY.

Quebec, 10th December, 1870.