

of national characteristics, as well as of exceptional instances of individual excellence, within the ample bounds of our young Dominion.

SOME OF OUR MIGRATORY BIRDS.*

WINTER BIRDS.—The Snow Buntings, the harbingers of cold and stormy weather, come to us from the icy shores of Greenland, about the 10th or 15th of December, and have been known to remain till the first week in March. They are said to make their appearance at Hudson Bay, about the end of March or early in April, where they remain a few weeks, before going north to Greenland or Spitzbergen. They feed entirely on the seeds of wild plants, and sometimes become very fat. "Snow birds on toast" is considered a delicacy in Quebec.

The Snowy Owls may be seen in the neighbourhood of Toronto Bay in the months of December and January. Nothing can exceed the exquisite softness and beauty of their thick warm plumage. They feed on mice, fish and small birds.

The Pine Grosbeaks are very rare visitors, but may be seen in severe winters, during January and February, leaving about the end of March. They have a sweet melodious call, delicately beautiful plumage, and feed upon the buds of the maple or berries of the mountain ash.

The Bohemian Wax-Wing is another rare visitor, only coming in very cold weather; it resembles the Cherry Bird in appearance. The Red Cross Bill, the White-Winged Cross Bill and the Pine Finch are all winter visitors, although they have been known to remain in the woods of Lake Simcoe all the year.

The Shore Lark, the last of the winter birds, is frequently seen in the

neighbourhood of Ottawa. It leaves early in March. The male bird has a black tuft of feathers on the head, and a crescent-shaped patch of black on the throat. It has a soft melodious call, and feeds on grasses and weeds.

Spring and Summer Birds.—The cawing of the Crows may be heard in the end of February, or the first warm days of March. They then do good service in feeding upon noxious insects and vermin, although later they destroy the eggs of many valuable birds. The Song Sparrow arrives about the 16th or 23rd of March, and at the same time the cheery song of the Robin may be heard—none among all the feathered visitors so worthy of being cherished and protected. The quantity of grubs, caterpillars, cutworms, crickets and grasshoppers, devoured by the Robin and other Thrushes is something marvellous.

The Robin is quickly followed by the Blue-Bird. Not so bold and fearless, but a gentle sociable bird; if unmolested it will build its nest in any quiet corner. In the early part of April, the Pee-wee Fly Catcher, tame and familiar, comes back year after year to the same spot to build its nest, its voice suggestive of warmth and sunshine, and the waking up of insect life.

From the 5th to the 10th of April the Sparrows arrive. The Tree Sparrow, the Chipping Sparrow or *Grey Bird*, the Purple Finch and the Ground Robin; and now the increasing softness and mildness of the atmosphere bring the cheery twittering of the Swallows, beginning to come from the 10th to the 20th of April. The White-Billed Swallow, the Sand Marten, the Barn Swallow, the Purple Martin and the Chimney Swallow, are some of the varieties; but of late years the pertinacious English Sparrow has ousted the Marten from its old quarters in the towns.

The Blackbirds and Grakles come

*Founded on a paper read by Hon. G. W. Allan, before the Canadian Institute, Toronto.