

Each of these orders might comprise as follows: I. order, 36; II. 18; III. 120; IV. 15; V. 42; VI. 69. Canada, not embracing all the varieties of climate and temperature, which the American Union does, cannot be expected to unite all the varieties of birds to be found in the United States. The Canadian Fauna is nevertheless very beautiful and varied in its features, including a numerous collection of birds of prey. The web-footed order are well represented in Canada—the Woodpecker family comprises some most brilliantly habited individuals—Alex. Wilson spoke eloquently and truly, when he said, "The ornithology of the United States exhibits a rich display of the most splendid colours; from the green, silky, gold, bespangled down of the minute humming bird, scarce three inches in extent, to the black coppery wings of the gloomy condor, of sixteen feet, who sometimes visits our northern regions; a numerous and powerful band of songsters, that, for sweetness, variety, and melody, are surpassed by no country on earth; an ever-changing scene of migration from torrid to temperate and from northern to southern regions, in quest of suitable season, food and climates, and such an amazing diversity in habit, economy, form, disposition and faculties, so uniformly hereditary in each species, and so completely adequate to their peculiar wants and convenience, as to overwhelm us with astonishment at the power, wisdom, and beneficence of the Creator.

"In proportion as we become acquainted with these particulars, our visits to, and residence in the country, become more and more agreeable. Formerly, on such occasions, we found ourselves in solitude, or, with respect to the feathered tribes, as it were in a strange country, where the manners, language, and faces of all were either totally overlooked, or utterly unknown to us; now, we find ourselves among interesting and well known neighbours and acquaintances, and, in the notes of every songster, recognize with satisfaction the voice of an old friend and companion. A study thus tending to multiply our enjoyments at so cheap a rate, and to lead us, by such pleasing gradations, to the contemplation and worship of the Great First Cause, the Father and Preserver of all, can neither be idle nor useless, but is worthy of rational being, and doubtless agreeable to the Deity."

The lecturer, by means of the diagram of a bird drawn on a large board, explained the different portions: *Primaries, Secondaries, Tertiaries, Scapulars, rump feathers, Auriculars, Tarsi, Tibia, Iris, Mirror*, total length, *alar extent*, and a variety of other technical terms.

"Linnaeus, in his *Systema Nature*, divides the class of birds into six orders. Blumenbach makes nine orders. Cuvier makes six. Viellot, five. Vigors, five. Temminck, in his *Manuel d'Ornithologie*, sixteen; Agassiz and Gould, only four orders.

The vastness of the subject now before us is such that I am compelled to confess how rashly I acted in promising you at the onset a discourse on the ornithology of Canada. It would require, at least, a dozen of lectures to place the topic before you in a becoming manner. I shall, therefore, be satisfied with familiarising you with some of the specimens belonging to our museum. Let us select the Hawks, Owls, and some of the singing Birds.

At least 20 species of the former family visit our latitudes; the delicately spotted Goshawk, identical with the European species: the breast is of a lovely ash colour, with most delicate markings; there is the rough-legged buzzard; there the Marsh Hawk, whom I am sure, on viewing this specimen, you all recognize as that unwelcome prowler who made you miss by his swoop such a shot, on the Chateau Richer, Crane Island—Sorel or Deschambault marshes, at some period or other of your sporting career; there is another species with large expanse of wing; that is the Broad-Winged Hawk, not so large as the Goshawk, and of plumage less bright; then comes the sharp-shinned; the Pigeon Hawk and the Sparrow Hawk, with its elegant cinnamon coloured back and black bands on its tail. I miss here a splendid individual, the great Duck Hawk—*Bullet* headed Hawk, as some style him, and who is none

else than the celebrated Peregrine Falcon of the days of chivalry; he is pretty common in Canada West; one was shot at Charlesburg, near this city some years back. The limits of my discourse prevent me from quoting for your benefit, the elegant and truthful descriptions of the Peregrine and his fearless compeers, as sketched by the great Audubon. Shall we leave this fierce band of robbers by day, and investigate the career of those formidable midnight raiders, the Owls? See how grave, how omniscient they look, with their rolling, shining yellow eyes, their soft plumage and their warm fur leggings, impervious to cold the most intense. There he sits on his perch, the dignified patriarch of the whole tribe: the Great Cinereous Owl; look at him well—he is not an every-day visitor by any means—the largest of the owls; and even exceeds in size that white and fierce marauder, the great Snowy Owl, who as you know is frequently shot in the surrounding country during the winter months. Nature has adapted itself wonderfully, to these birds. They hunt by day as well as by night, and in the soft moonlight, you can scarcely hear the rustling sound of their wings, when pursuing hares or other small animals. Of the ferocity of the Snowy Owl unquestionable proofs exist. The attack of a Snowy Owl, rendered desperate through hunger on a Roman Catholic Missionary, is amusingly related in a *Journal of Travel* on the Labrador coast. The Reverend Father was so astounded at the daring of the bird of prey, that he sought his safety in flight. Of the Virginian or Great Horned Owl, there are some fine varieties, Atlanticus, Magillanicus, Pacificus, Arcticus, Virginianus: *Atlanticus* and *Virginianus* alone visit Canada; they are often found caught by the leg in steel traps baited for foxes; the ferocious attitude and indomitable courage this owl exhibits, when approached by dog or man is wonderful to behold; he snaps his powerful beak, rolls his bright eyes and erects his feathers;—the very emblem of concentrated rage. I have not heard of any successful effort to domesticate the Great Horned Owl. In some countries, the Barn Owl is highly valued as a destroyer of rats and mice.

I have now placed before you in a row, according to their size, the Owls which visit Canada; you notice the gradation from the Great Cinereous as large as a large Turkey, to the little Saw Whet, a sweetly pretty, tiny fellow, not much bigger than a snow bunting; what an interesting group of wiseacres they all seem? Legislative or City Councillors in conclave! I have informed you that the most numerous order of birds by far was the *Passeres*. It would require a great many evenings to initiate you into their habits and history. I will consequently merely direct your attention to those now before you wearing the showiest liveries and gaudiest uniforms; there, you will remark the brightest of Canadian birds, the Vermillion Tanager, or Summer Red Bird, how velvety his black wings do appear, surrounded by red feathers. Hot weather alone attracts him over the Canadian border from the scented magnolia groves of Louisiana and Florida. The peasant lad, meeting him, in our green woods, in ecstasy at such a display of splendour, hurries home to tell his mother that he has at last seen "*Le Roi des Oiseaux*," for such is the distinctive cognomen the Summer Red Bird, during his July visits obtains amongst the French Canadian peasantry. That sprightly looking individual with a cinnamon coloured back and wings, a white breast and long rounded tail feathers, is the Black Billed Cuckoo; his shrill note is occasionally heard in hedges round the city. Unlike his European congener, his habits as a parent are unimpeachable; you never catch him depositing eggs in other bird's nests,—foundlings at at other individual's doors; this shabby unnatural practice may suit the Cow pen bird of Canada; but our dandy, merry Cuckoo, is too excellent a gentleman, too kind-hearted a fellow to behave thus. We have two Cuckoos in Canada, the white and the black billed. Next to him, you notice a bird encased in a sleek, shiny, black uniform, with gold and crimson *shoulder straps*, a veritable rifleman

amongst the feathered tribe; that is the Red Winged starling; is he not a jaunty, military looking son of song? sporting *epaulettes*, he ought to stand well with the ladies; doubtless his name of *Field Officer* is due to their admiration of his gaudy uniform. There sits Robin Red Breast. What nice anecdotes I could tell you about him my familiar friend, who returns each spring to nestle in a bushy evergreen under my Library window, notwithstanding several murderous raids made in the vicinity, in the dead of night by some marauding grimalkin, when unfortunately for my feathered neighbour the trusty guardian of the grounds, my mastiff *Wolf* is rapped in balmy sleep. You may understand what a lively memory birds retain of the spots in which protection has been extended to them. For six years past have I protected the birds building on my property; it is certainly astonishing so see how they have multiplied.

What a charming musician, the Red Eyed Fly Catcher during his protracted stay from May to September: scarcely visible to the naked, amidst the green boughs of a lofty elm, he warbles forth his love song from sunrise to sunset. How eagerly I watched for the return, from the South of the *Sweet, Sweet Canada bird*, the white throated sparrow—whose piercing whistle resounds even in the depth of night! How is it he did not accompany this spring his congener, the Song Sparrow, so dear to every Canadian heart, with his simple but soft melody?

Have any of you ever watched the Red start darting like an arrow, after the small flies, then relighting on the twig, uttering his shrill *increasing* note, very similar to that of that pretty summer Yellow bird, also one of the fly catchers as you are aware,—a family most numerous and if not generally gifted with song, at least wearing a very bright livery: the Red start, the male bird is easily known by its black plumage: when it is flying, it discloses the under portions of its wings, which appear of bright maize. The female is more of an olive hue, and does not resemble at all her mate: they breed all round Quebec and stop here about three months. It is needless for me to furnish you with a very lengthy description of the *Blue Jay*: you are all acquainted with his cerulean plumage and harsh note especially before rain.

I must not however, forget to point out to you that richly dressed individual, wearing black and orange badges: that is the Baltimore Oriole. He visits the warmest parts of Western Canada, Black and orange, did I say? why, that was the official livery of a great English landowner of Maryland, in the days when democracy amongst our neighbours was not. We have it on the authority of Alexander Wilson, no mean authority, as you know, that this brilliant July visitor took its name from Lord Baltimore, on whose estates a great number of Orioles were to be seen. It is satisfactory to find that even in Republican America, the English aristocracy is becomingly represented not only at the White House, but also in the green fields and green woods of the great Republic. The *Baltimore Oriole* is a tolerably good musician. You can all see how brilliant are the colours of these Canada birds now exhibited to you; as for song, we may safely assert with the same Alexander Wilson, that the *Fauna* of America can compete with that of Europe: true we have not the Sky Lark, nor the Black bird, and the Robin although very similar to him in song and habits is still his inferior; but we have the Wood Thrush, with its double tongued flute notes, Wilson's Thrush, the Brown Thrush, the gingling, roystering Bobolink, the Canadian Gold Finch whose warble reminds you of the Canary. The far famed European Nightingale has certainly met with a worthy rival in the American Mocking Bird, whose extraordinary musical powers have been so graphically delineated by the great Audubon. My young friends, I had promised to introduce you in the very *sanctum* of Natural History, and the advanced hour of the evening compels me to leave you, merely at the threshold. If it should so please you we may, at some future day, resume the investigation of this subject. I thank you for your long and constant attention. *Au revoir*.

J. M. LE MOINE.