

Yellow birches (*Betula Excelsia*) are our only deciduous forest trees that carry a quantity of seeds during winter, and where they abound, as they do all through the Island, they are exceedingly favorable for the wintering of certain members of the Finch tribe. The Purple Finch, with his crimson cowl and plaintive whistle will sometimes stay all winter, and startle us on bright frosty mornings by pouring a rattling cascade of joyous song from the loftiest summits of the great birch forest.

A humbler winter companion, but not less welcome, is the Song Sparrow. In the fall he picks up fallen seeds of birch and alder, but when snow deluges his home in the wilderness, he comes sociably about the farmsteads, and barter his sweet song for a meal in the yard or at the hay rick. A friend's house is placed on the sheltered side of a magnificent beech grove. The Chickadees and Blue Jays come every day to be fed at the door, and the Song Sparrow comes with them. Every sunny spell he will mount a sheltered spray and tune his gentle fife to the winter sky. And all over the settlement others are wintering by snow-laced hay rick and seed strown barn-yard.

Purple Finches and Song Sparrows do not usually winter north of New England. How is it that they have a partiality for this Island in the ice-bound waters of the Gulf? You observe that our forests are of noble yellow birches and not gloomy conifers. Our land is filled with broad grain fields and crowded farmsteads instead of great spreads of wilderness wastes. All this is the produce of a richer soil—a soil producing abundance of seed-bearing plants everywhere.

If you visit this Province in summer you will observe that everywhere a line of low red cliffs divides its swelling green from the blue wave. These broken red cliffs are the out-crop of the New Red Sandstone rocks of which the Island is composed. Everywhere the world over, this formation supports a fertile soil, and everywhere in this section of America, where it prevails, is the chosen home of bird life. The Connecticut Valley, the Western Shore of Nova Scotia, as well as this soft-outlined Isle of the Gulf, are noted haunts of the Finch and the Warbler.

Thus we see that the favorite haunts of these birds were marked out in the long, long past, when the Gulf waves and the Atlantic swell first laid down the sediment for the red rocks of the Permian and the Triassic.

The Goldfinches, that made the pastures of summer so gay with