

there was hardly a blossom to be seen upon them.

These birds are also very partial to the buds of the maple, and I have seen the ground beneath the trees on which they had been feeding, completely strewn with the outer covering of the buds which they had devoured. The berries of the mountain ash also constitute a very favourite food, and in some seasons, when these birds have visited us in great numbers, I have not unfrequently seen them feeding fearlessly upon the berries of the mountain ash trees in the streets of the town, undisturbed apparently by the noise and bustle around them, and the seeds being the part they preferred, they would scatter the skin of the fruit upon the ground beneath, where it was trodden by the feet of the passers by, until the pavement became almost crimsoned.

Audubon speaks of curious sores or excrescences which appear sometimes on the legs of these birds, produced, as he supposes, by the resinous matter of the fir tree, on which they principally obtain their food. I have never met with any instances of the kind among those shot here; but if the disease is caused, as Audubon supposes, by constant feeding on the resinous buds of the pine and fir, their diet when in this part of Canada is certainly sufficiently varied to prevent its occurrence.

The Pine Grosbeak has a particularly soft, musical call-note, and in its native woods it is said to sing very sweetly.

The plumage of the male bird is exceedingly handsome; the general colour over the head, neck, breast, back of the neck and rump being a rich carmine; the feathers of the back and scapulars, greyish brown, more or less tinged and edged with carmine; the abdomen and lower tail coverts, ash grey; wings, blackish-brown; the primaries and their coverts narrowly edged with white, the secondaries broadly edged with white; secondary coverts and first row of small coverts tipped with reddish-white; the smaller coverts edged with red; tail, blackish brown. In some individuals the colouring on the head, back and rump is more or less varied with shades of vermillion, orange and yellow, and there is often much difference in the general brilliancy of the plumage; indeed, I have seldom procured two specimens exactly alike. The female is much more sober in her attire than the male bird, the colouring of the head, neck and rump being generally a brownish-yellow, interspersed with a few brighter shades of orange; the feathers of the back, throat and abdomen are but slightly tinged with the same colours, the general tint being ash-grey.

Unlike the species previously described, the Crossbill (*Curvirostra Americana*), although more frequently seen in winter, is nevertheless an inhabitant, more or less common, of our pine and

hemlock forests throughout the whole year. It is in the autumn and winter months, however, that they are most frequently observed.

In cold and stormy weather I have seen them in little flocks of fifteen or twenty about barnyards and outhouses, sometimes descending to the ground to feed, like so many pigeons, and then settling, when disturbed, on the roofs of the nearest buildings, at other times alighting on the farm-house itself, and picking at the mortar on the walls.

They are said to very fond of any saline substance, and as salt is sometimes mixed with plaster or whitewash, it may in some measure account for their curious proceedings. But be this as it may, I have seen these birds clinging like so many plants to the wall of a cottage, busily at work picking off the whitewash, and although frequently disturbed, returning again to their employment, until the walls bore very evident marks of their visits.

Although thus tame and familiar at certain seasons, for the greater part of the year the Crossbills frequent almost entirely the pine and hemlock forests, feeding upon the seeds of the white pine and hemlock spruce, which their strong and powerful bills enable them to extricate from the cones with the greatest ease. They frequently stand on one foot only, and employ the other after the manner of Parrots, in conveying the food to their bills. These birds utter a clear, sharp and not unmusical note, the whole flock chattering as they fly. They pass through the air in a tolerably swift, undulating flight, capable of being protracted over a long distance.

The plumage of the Crossbill varies according to the age and sex of the individual. The general colour of the old males is a dull red, mixed more or less with orange and yellow on the rump, head and breast, the colouring being always brightest on these parts; quills and tail feathers, brownish black; the red colour is paler on the lower parts, passing into whitish on the belly. The colours of the young males are paler and duller, the upper parts a greenish-brown, with an admixture of yellow tints on the back, and more especially the rump. In the female, the upper parts are greyish-brown tinged with green; the sides of the head and neck of the same colour as the back; the under parts pale greenish-yellow, brighter on the fore part of the breast.

There is a very beautiful variety of Crossbill which is sometimes, though rarely, met with here: the White-winged Crossbill (*Curvirostra leucoptera*). They are smaller than the common Crossbill, and the general colour of the plumage in the male bird is a dark crimson; the wings have two very distinct, well-defined bands of pure white.

There is a very graceful little bird frequently seen in company with the Crossbills, and resembling them somewhat in its habits: the Pine Finch or Pine Linnet (*Chrysomitris Pinus*), but which I have only met with in this neighbourhood during the autumn and winter months. It