

excavating a hole in a decayed tree or stump. Audubon mentions having found in Maine, a nest of *Sitta Canadensis*, which was dug in the decayed wood to the depth of fourteen inches. Cones, in his "Birds of the Colorado Valley," referring to *Sitta Carolinensis*, states, "that it regularly digs a hole for itself, both sexes working assiduously till an excavation, it may be fifteen or twenty inches deep, is prepared for the reception of the nest." The European Nuthatch appears to nest differently, according to Morris "the nest is placed in some hole in a tree. If the entrance is too large, they narrow it with clay, until it is of the right width." Now, if all these descriptions are correct, we find a wide difference in the nesting habits of our Nuthatches and their European congener.

My observations have, so far, been confined to *Sitta Carolinensis*, three nests of which I have taken during the past five years, none of which were in holes formed by these birds, but in natural cavities, in living trees. From these observations I would suppose a natural cavity, or the deserted nest of some wood-pecker, or squirrel to be the place usually selected, and that these birds never, or "hardly ever," dig a hole for themselves. The following extract from my note-book refers to the last nest taken.

Returning from a visit to a sugar camp in the spring of 1878, I heard the cry of a pair of Nuthatches, following in the direction of the sound, I soon perceived the birds and was not surprised, even at this early season, to find that they were making preparations to build. One of the birds had in its mouth a large piece of downy looking material, with which, after a short time, it flew to a neighbouring tree and proceeded to the spot selected for the nest. This was a round knot hole, overgrown by bark, and about four feet from the ground. I ventured to peep in, but all was darkness within, and as I did not wish to disturb the birds, retired, to observe them from a distance. For several days both male and female were busy carrying material for the nest, after which I did not see them for some time, as after completing the nest they apparently retired to some secluded spot, no doubt to complete their nuptial arrangements. On the 20th April, with mallet and chisel in hand, I again went to the tree and on looking down into the cavity could see the female on the nest. The hole, though sufficiently large to admit a bird of greater size than the Nuthatch, was too small to allow me to insert my hand. Before pro-

ceeding to enlarge it, I knocked vigorously on the tree but could not frighten the brave little bird away. I then took a slender stick which I thrust gently into the hole and endeavored to force her to leave by touching the head and wings. This, she resented by pecking angrily at the twig and I was at last obliged to allow her to remain while I enlarged the cavity. The nest I found to be composed of a large amount of miscellaneous matter, rabbit hair predominating. The material was spread over a large surface in the cavity, with a well defined depression in the centre, which contained the eggs, nine in number. Incubation had not commenced and I transferred them to my cabinet without accident. This was the largest set I obtained, the other two nests having contained six and eight respectively.

W. W. DUNSTON.

Montreal, March 10th, 1882.

MONTREAL BRANCH, ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF ONTARIO.

The eighty-ninth meeting of this society was held on the 13th March, at the residence of the President, H. J. Lyman, Esq., who read a paper on the Lepidoptera collected at Saint St. Marie, in 1881, by Dr. Robert Bell, of the Geological Survey. All the species taken are also found at Montreal, with the exception of *Coenonympha inornata*, Edw., a butterfly taken in the Western States, but which extends into the Algoma region of Canada. A pleasant hour was spent over the microscope, and several rare and beautifully illustrated works on Entomology were also on the table for the inspection of the members.

REPLY TO ORNITHOLOGICAL QUERIES.

SIR,—In your March Number it is queried if the nest of the Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*) has been found in latitude 45° . The latitude of Listowel is nearly 41° , but owing to its elevation, is probably as cold as 45° of the sea level. The Whip-poor-will is quite common in the swampy woods of this neighbourhood, and during the calm hours that follow the sunset of the early summer evenings, its loud and melancholy notes may be heard in the town, from the woods north and south, though nearly a mile distant. Its eggs have been found by several parties in the vicinity, and one collector who procured some and appeared well acquainted with its habits, informed me that its nest is always sure to be found near the place where its notes are heard