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FALL MIGRANTS.

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An airman recently expressed the belief that the increasing interest in air navigation would eventually tend to induce a seasonal movement on the part of the human race. Even now many wealthy people spend the winter in Florida and California. In the days of the stage-coach, less than a century ago, this was unthought of. At that time a journey to the nearest town, even to one's nearest neighbor, was often an event. Only with the harnessing of steam and electricity was the Californian or Floridan trip possible to the northerner. Who can say what the mastery of the air will produce within another century.

Such thoughts should stimulate us in the study of bird movements—the migrations of these pastmasters in aeronautics. However, anyone who has become well launched in this study needs no such stimulant. Each recurring season he is refreshed by the return of familiar birds and thrilled with a glimpse of others that journey on to a more northern home. In the fall the southward journey completes the two movements known as bird migration—or rather I should reverse the order—the spring movement is the return home. Should it happen that certain birds, moving south in the fall, were to remain there, they would be emigrants from our point of view and immigrants from the southerner's viewpoint. Migration entails a return journey.

In this latitude the spring migration may be said to commence in February and finish in June; while the fall migration commences in July and extends into the winter, making an almost continuous movement of one sort or another, throughout the year, with the exception of three or four weeks during June and July, which marks the height of the nesting season in the north. Thus the fall migration covers late summer, autumn, and early winter, and the term is one of convenience as it marks the height of the movement.

To the novice, who has watched the return of birds in the spring for the first time, there is a vast difference in watching their fall departure. If you consider merely the facility in naming birds as they

pass and repass, the spring time is the most favorable for observation. In the first place, after our long winter we are eagerly awaiting the birds that we associate with warmer weather, and so most northerners are to some extent familiar with the appearance of our common birds in spring, although it is often the song that is welcomed—if it were not for the song many birds might escape notice. When recording the return of our summer resident birds one has these advantages. The bird is in full plumage (with rare exceptions) limited at most to two phases (male and female); it is generally in song, and one is more keenly on the lookout for it. Familiarity with the bird throughout the summer begets carelessness about its departure and the last birds are apt to slip away unnoticed. On the other hand those that merely pass through this district to nest farther north are often in a hurry—they may linger in the states to the south, but when this latitude is reached they appear to have an important appointment elsewhere and we miss seeing many of them.

In the fall these northerners are more leisurely; the call to move south is seldom so insistent and we have more opportunity to watch them. Again, they keep more in the open—one sees birds of the deep woods right at his door-step. Many times before starting on an all-day walk I have taken a preliminary survey in my garden, and have seen there the rarest birds of the day.

The feature that makes fall study at once a delight and a torment is the many different plumages often found in one species. Thus we may see juvenile birds changing into first fall plumage, those of an earlier brood that have already assumed fall dress, and adult birds in various stages of moult, all in the same flock. If, as is often the case, you are watching a mixed flock of birds that contains species with close resemblances and all in constant motion, confusion may reign.

In regard to classifying birds the disadvantages in studying fall migration are chiefly, comparative absence of song and greater variation of plumage;