

order into which this class of the animal kingdom is divided by *Naturalists*, and of every size from the gigantic White-headed Eagle and great horned Owl, to the little tree-creeper and tiny humming-bird, which darts through the sunbeams on invisible wings and luxuriates among the honey-yielding flowers, and of almost every hue which the brush of the artist can paint. But many of these birds carefully avoid the presence of man, and love to dwell in the most retired and unbroken recesses of the wild woods; naturally preferring such places, to cleared fields and cultivated scenery. An occasional glimpse of their elegant forms and gaudy plumage is sometimes obtained, by the watchful naturalist, as they flit from branch to branch, and suddenly disappear amid the dense foliage of the surrounding vegetation, as if afraid that a close inspection would prove fatal to their wild native freedom. It is consequently difficult to attain a certain knowledge of their habits, and the families and genera to which they belong; though the greater part of them belong to the Passerine (migratory) order. In these researches, however, the persevering naturalist finds much for his active spirit to work upon. He may plunge into the labyrinth of pathless woods, and brush-covered swamps, or marshy grounds, encounter untold difficulties, and suffer many disappointment and discomforts, arising from the obstructing materials he meets with and the vast swarms of tormenting insects which assail every step of his progress; and having, perhaps, obtained a few specimens, discovered and examined some nests, and collected a confused mass of information relating to *Ornithology*, he must breathe over them his own creative spirit, e'er they are exposed to the vulgar gaze. It will therefore be seen that the path of the *Canadian Naturalist*, who would attempt to reveal the mysteries of *Ornithology*, though by him pursued with pleasure, is often a difficult and thorny road.

But what can be more delightful, to an intelligent and educated mind, than a morning walk through our woods and fields in the early part of Summer. The sun is just rising above the eastern horizon, the dew is heavy on the vegetation, the air is calm, and the emerald foliage and blossoms with which the woods, and orchards are clothed, render the scene delightful; but above, all the varied melodies of our wild birds, which greet the ear on every side, enrapture and delight the student of nature. Prominent among our feathered songsters at this early hour, is the Robin, the Bluebird, the Songthrush and Bulfinch; the song, *whistling*, and Woodsparrows, the Fly-catcher, and the twittering Swallow, while as the day advances, the twittering notes of the Wren, the war cry of the King-bird, the pleasant lay of the meadow Lark, the soft melody of the *Scarlet Tanager*, and the flute-like notes of the Oriole, intermingled with the warbling of lesser songsters are heard echoing through the fields and woods. And again when the solar orb is sinking in the western sky, and the shades of evening approach, the feathered tribes pour forth their sweetest notes to the departing day. Not even when the last rays of the setting sun have ceased to illuminate the western horizon, and the dim twilight has wrapt in its dark folds the surrounding landscape, not even then are the feathered tribes wholly silent, for then the Owl sends forth his gloomy notes