

their opinions when given. In all other subjects his word is law, his ideas paramount, but in the English period he must lay aside—not dignity—but superiority, if he wishes to reach “the genial current of the soul.”

In view of the fact that this is Canada's commercial age and that rapid physical development in any nation opposes literary culture, it behooves the modern public school and its teachers to count no factor trifling which can aid in giving the rising generation of Canadians a true love for that English tongue and literature which is their national heritage.

Our Birds.—When They Arrive.

J. W. BANKS, ST. JOHN, N. B.

A record of the migrations of birds will show with what remarkable precision they return in the spring to their summer homes. A cold, northerly wind or a severe sleet storm may detain them a day or two. Birds do not move rapidly when migrating in the day-time. Insect-eating birds, such as fly-catchers, warblers, vireos and others, fly from tree to tree, feeding and resting. During the night their flight is continuous. The larger birds, such as herons, geese and ducks, are known to cover six hundred miles in continuous flight.

One afternoon during the first week in April, the air was clear and the sky slightly overcast. From an elevated position near St. John a glance skyward revealed a number of birds flying northward. They were high overhead. As I looked my eyes became accustomed to the distance. As far as I could see to the east and west, at different altitudes, the air was teeming with birds. They were not in flocks; but each one flew with a directness as if to surpass in the race. I watched them till my eyes became weary with the strain; and yet there was seemingly no end of birds of different forms and sizes flying due north. From their forms and flight I judged them to be sea birds.

The Earliest Arrival.

One would be reluctant to associate the long, slender billed woodcock (*Philohela minor*) with frozen ground and snow storms. Yet they are the first of our birds to arrive in the spring, making their appearance about the 17th of March. This bird, although short legged, is one of the family of

waders. In the early spring they inhabit the brook-sides, swails and ditches. They seek their food, consisting of earth worms, late in the evening and on moonlight nights. During the summer and autumn they inhabit alder swamps and covers.

Nest building begins early. The usual number of eggs, four, are laid the last week in April. One brood only is raised in a season.

The Ever Cheerful Song Sparrow.

The song sparrow, (*Melospiza fasciata*), an abundant summer resident, arrives about the 28th of March. This resolute little bird leads the van in the spring, and is the last of the family to leave in the autumn. He has also the distinction of being one of the three species to raise three broods during the summer. He is rightfully named song sparrow. With the snow covering the ground inches deep, and every prospect of going supperless, the air resounds with the cheerful tune of the song sparrow, as if to revive the drooping spirits of his kindred.

A Well Known Bird.

The Junco, (*Junco hyemalis*), an abundant summer resident, arrives about the 28th of March in company with the song sparrow. Like the latter, he inhabits gardens and yards while the snow still covers the ground, bravely enduring the cold and storms of early April. When the ground becomes bare they assemble in large flocks, continuing this till the mating season. After many a battle, furiously singing his defiant song, with open beak and with wings and tail extended chasing his rivals through the trees and shrubbery, junco and his demure little mate settle on their chosen or “allotted” nesting spot, whether fertile, barren or swampy, or a cleared space in the woods. If weather conditions are favorable, three broods are raised in a season.

Robin Redbreast.

The robin, (*Merula migratoria*), is an abundant summer resident, inhabiting all situations except the heavy timbered woods. Flocks arriving the last of March or first of April, after a halt of a day or two, continue on their northward journey, some going into the Arctic regions. About the 20th of April they become general. Few, if any of our feathered friends are deserving of so much praise as the resourceful robin. The enormous amount of nearly all forms of insect food