

Concord River

in different directions, their varied notes drowning the weaker voices of the Warblers and Sparrows. Every now and then, however, the song of a Chestnut-sided Warbler, or Black and White Creeper would rise above the din, and in the distance I occasionally caught the *zee dee dee* of a Golden Winged Warbler, or the ringing notes of a Field Sparrow. . . .

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April 5, 1891

CAMBRIDGE TO CONCORD. Starting at 9.30 with Almy, I drove to Concord by way of the Lyman place, Swedenborgian settlement and Lincoln. The sunshine was bright and cheerful but the wind bitterly cold. We saw no snow until just before we reached Lincoln. Between Lincoln and Concord the northern exposures were white with it and it lay two inches deep in swamps and under pines. Wachusett white from base to summit.

MANY SPARROWS. The country was alive with birds. In fact I have not seen a heavier flight for years. Robins, Song Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, Tree Sparrows and Juncos were the most numerous represented. All four species of Sparrows were often seen in one flock but we saw some flocks composed wholly of Juncos and one of Fox Sparrows — about thirty birds. They were mostly in old fields along brush-grown walls or among weeds or stubble. In places they rose in clouds at our approach, flying into the nearest bushes or woods.

On the George Keyes place in Concord I heard Fox Sparrows singing and, following up the sound, came upon twenty

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or more in company with about an equal number of Tree Sparrows and Juncos. They were flitting in and out among some hazel bushes and wild cherry saplings that bordered a stone wall, occasionally venturing out a little way into a stubble field. Every few minutes a Fox Sparrow would begin its divine song but before it had half finished another would join in, then another, and still others, followed by Tree Sparrows, until a dozen or more of both kinds were singing at once, the trilling of several Juncos coming in, in the intervals, like a low accompaniment. I know of nothing finer in the way of bird music than one of these outbursts heard, as I heard them to-day, with the warm April sunshine lighting up the brown fields and the bracing north-west wind piping in the bare tree tops.

HAWKS. While on our way to Concord just as we were entering the village of Lincoln, we saw a Broad-winged Hawk soaring overhead at a moderate height. Its peculiar shape and markings made it quite unmistakable. A little further on a fine old male Marsh Hawk appeared, beating a meadow on the left of the road, following a ditch for some distance and keeping much of the time below the level of its banks. This bird appeared fully as white as an adult Herring Gull.

As we approached the hills below Ball's Hill, a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks began screaming among the pines where the Cooper's Hawks breed and the next moment rose above the trees and soared majestically upward, circling in opposite directions and passing each other every half turn. They mounted to such a height that we actually could not see them at all with-

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out the aid of our glasses and finally scaled down on a long incline into the Bedford Swamp, descending with meteoric speed.

Just after they disappeared, as I was starting to paddle again, we heard a Grouse chitter on a little wooded knoll, now an island within 20 yards, and presently saw the bird stalk over the crest under a small hemlock. Our attention was next attracted by two pairs of Goosanders, the drakes in full plumage, which were floating in mid-stream. They soon rose and were joined by a Black Duck, all five birds finally alighting again in the wood-encircled meadow near the pines on the edge of the Bedford Swamp. We followed and, under the cover of the outer belt of birches, got within about 200 yards of them and watched them for ten or fifteen minutes through our glasses. The drakes were very showy, looking almost as white as Gulls, their coral red bills very conspicuous. One of them repeatedly lay over on his side and plumed his breast and abdomen, displaying the rich salmon coloring of these parts! Both drakes devoted much of the time during which we had them under our glasses to preening and arranging their feathers but they also swam about with heads lowered and bills immersed to the eyes, apparently scanning the water beneath in search of fish. The females paddled slowly about, apparently doing nothing in particular. There was no diving on the part of any of them. At length we showed ourselves and the Sheldrake at once flew but the Black Duck who had gone fast asleep with head buried in dorsal feathers remained behind. His bewilderment and consternation when he at length awoke and discovered our boat approaching rapidly was very amusing. . . .

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