

way I ever find anything — maybe that is the attitude of the “seer,” not the “watcher”).

Some years ago when I first realized I was seeing these birds every spring I went to the bird book to identify them. I soon jumped to the conclusion they were American Pipits — but, alas, I find one must not jump at conclusions, one must be sure if he wishes his friends to respect his identity of birds. Margaret and Stuart immediately began asking innumerable questions about the birds. In fact, they almost had me convinced that it might be a Sprague's Pipit (much commoner and a summer resident here). But my confidence in my former identification was completely rebuilt when Margaret came home one weekend

with the news that George Ledingham sees American Pipits in the spring on the farm near Moose Jaw. So for a year or so I was one jump (or should I say one bird?) ahead of the bird “watcher.” Last spring, however, the infinite patience of the bird watcher enabled my sister to catch up with me. After vainly walking the fields to see American Pipits I had spotted, Margaret rode with me to where I had seen two during my seeding operations that morning. There on a flat in the summerfallow field were the pair of American Pipits. Now I had proved my identity of the birds, but the bird watcher had caught up to me. Whether you are a “watcher” or a “seer” you, too, may “find” or “see” these beautiful sparrow-sized birds come May 5 to 7 if you're in our area.

Entrancing Puzzle — Nature

By ELIZABETH CRUICKSHANK

Life is a puzzle, yet we know all the bits and pieces we are privileged to see must fit together to make the magnificent master plan.

We witnessed a Northern Shrike in action this winter when it dropped then recaptured a Red-breasted Nuthatch. These little acrobats must consume great quantities of insect pests as they climb up and down the tree trunks; but like the Crossbills they often forage on the tips of the branches becoming easy prey for predators. Saddened as we were to lose the little fellow whose life we shared on our birding jaunts, we knew that this experience was but a tiny bit of life's gigantic jigsaw.

Another piece we saw near the power-house where a company of ducks enjoyed the bread cast on the water by faithful friends. On the ice edge, like a lump of snow sat a Snowy Owl, biding his time.

However, a different spectacle began the New Year. In the quiet of the morning in a corner of the park we stood surrounded by tall evergreens, their outstretched arms heavy with their burden of snow, now sculptured by wind and glazed with light. Sun-bronzed cones of their topmost branches beckoned their feathered dinner guests.

Evergreen and poplar, ermine sheathed, sifted the sunlight which fell in patterns on the glistening carpet of snow, “deep and thick and even.” A radiance held the place, something immortally lovely, not just a carryover from the thoughts of the cradle of Bethlehem that seemed at the moment just around the corner. A glory shone round about and peace was in this place at least a reality.

As Bohemians, Grosbeaks, Chickadees, Redpolls, Crossbills, Finches and Nuthatches carolled, each from his own score, we felt the spirit of the infinite composing a symphonic poem for us humbly to interpret and to enjoy. Near the open field a flock of Sharptails flew, their wings strumming an accompaniment to the music that lingered in our hearts.

Along the road a company of Pine Grosbeaks “like twinkling winter lamps among the branches of the leafless trees” were lunching on the samaras still clinging to the ash trees. So near were we that we felt the oneness of small things shared, like the breaking of bread together.

On the crabapple tree Waxwings eating the scarlet fruit or resting to hum a little, presented another delayed Christmas card of unbelievable beauty.