

## WOODCOCK IN DECEMBER.

Early on the morning of the 16th December a man captured a woodcock which was running on the ground in the vicinity of Beaver Hall Terrace in this city. This fact would not have been ascertained, were it not for the numerous telegraph wires which surround the streets. During the previous night, the bird, in its southern flight, struck against a wire with force sufficient to take off the skin and feathers, from the front portion of the head, above the base of its beak. Many woodcock are killed in the spring and fall by telegraph wires, as they migrate only at night, and generally fly low. The bird was brought to the SPORTSMAN Office, the man being ignorant as to its name. Having no immediate accommodation for this interesting game bird, we sent it to Mr. Hall's restaurant, on St. James street, where it was living on Christmas eve. It may not be generally known to Sportsmen or Naturalists, that the woodcock has the power to erect about half an inch of the upper mandible, without opening the beak to its base. It appears as if the bird was supplied with a flexor nerve to elevate the tip of the upper mandible. This feature was quite remarkable in the above specimen. It is supposed that these late woodcock have been living in the vicinity of warm springs on the Laurentian Mountains.

## REPORT ON NOMENCLATURE.

We have received the Third Annual Book of the Michigan Sportsman's Association for 1880. It contains ninety-seven pages of interesting matter. Considering the fifth Committee Report valuable to Canadian Sportsmen and Naturalists, we publish the first portion in this issue of our journal.

Your Committee on "Nomenclature, both Popular and Scientific," would respectfully report: That uniform and correct names *should* be habitually employed in speaking and writing of the different species of game. On account of the loose way of naming animals

in vogue in this country, many otherwise well-written articles become quite unintelligible. In reading of field sports we are constantly in the position of Mr. A., who was informed by his friend B. that he had just scooped Mr. Johns of a cool \$100 at poker. Mr. Johns being A.'s clergyman, and a very exemplary man, an explanation was demanded, when it was ascertained that it was not Mr. Johns at all that had been relieved of his money, but Jones, the gamester. Such carelessness in the use of names is reprehensible and never necessary. And yet in writing of game, one will give a description of a day with the partridges. As there are two species of birds called by that name, we are left in doubt as to which he means. Another has been shooting elk. Does he mean wapiti, or the true elk, commonly called moose? Another has caught a fine string of pickered in the clear waters of Niagara river. We doubt the fact and the habitat. On investigation we find he enjoyed the superior sport of taking pike-perch. The same species receive different names in different places, and different species receive the same name. Some kinds are called by names that properly belong to other species, and thus the mixing and muddling goes on. One fish has received nineteen different names within a few hundred miles on the Atlantic coast. Herring are said to be taken in Lake Michigan, when it is known that there is not a herring west of the Niagara river, except such as are brought here dried or pickled. And so we might go on almost indefinitely depicting the ridiculousness of popular nomenclature. But the annoying fact is too well known to require amplification. Nor are we much better off when we turn to scientific classification and nomenclature; for ambitious naturalists are constantly re-arranging both.

What constitutes classification and nomenclature? Accepting the testimony of lexicographers, the first is an arrangement or distribution of groups in classes, orders, families, genera, and species, according to common