

The Rockwood Review.

NATURAL HISTORY NOTES.

BY W. YATES.

Many farmers in this Township suffered much loss from the depredations of field mice that harbored in the corn stooks, as the same were left starling to dry in the fields last fall.

And after the winter snow fell, the rodents resorted to nibbling the bark, under the snow line of young shade trees, as well as fruit trees. Maple saplings, beeches, June berries, (the Amelanchier), have been innumerable instances effectually girdled, and will die from the cause. The trees of the above description in many instances that have been saved, were such as had been previously protected by loose cylinders of sheet iron, tin, or tarpaper, surrounding the tree base 12 or 18 inches above the ground surface.

Even in the wild woods the same mischief was carried on through the winter, and thickets of maple trees, etc., were partly destroyed. But rather more surprising was the way that wild shrubs having an acrid and pungent flavored bark, such as the leather-wood and hamamelis, or witch hazel, being similarly denuded.

Have the rodent tribe medicinal instincts in swallowing these nauseous substances?

Dogs, as we all know, occasionally resort to eating the leaves and stems of the Mayweed, it is supposed as a cathartic, and where the Cardinal flower grows abundantly, in wild boggy situations, the poppy smelling seed Racemes, are extensively bitten off in the autumn by rambling cattle, and similar erratic or abnormal appetites, such as horses, sometimes show by eating greedily at certain times the resinous coarse leaves of the common Burdock!

And may there not be a similar selective tendency in the well known habit of Bovines, to pasture for one or two days in the early spring on the leaves of the wild

garlic, or Canadian Leek. This food substance rids the animals partaking it of the numerous parasites that ill wintered cattle are frequently annoyed with. This species of food seems as deterrent to cattle lice as is the mephiticism of *M. Mephitica* to the enemies of that quadruped.

The Rodents too are all of them much bothered by the attacks of wood ticks, which fasten on burrowing animals, or those that domicile themselves among rotten wood (as in tree hollows). Said ticks are careful to fasten on their victim in places difficult of access to the teeth, or paws, or claws of their unwilling post, as back of the ears, about the neck, under jaw, etc.

The groundhog, the various species of squirrel, and wild rabbits particularly, at the end of winter are rarely quite free from the presence and injuries of these sanguinary pests. And when snows are deep, the hare and rabbit frequently live much on the leaves of the swamp cedar, or on the bark of the bitter willow, which food substances though perhaps only resorted to in time of extreme hunger, necessarily impart their acridity to the bodily consuming animal tissues.

Yet the Ruffed Grouse on similar extremities, is known to resort to the berries of the poisonous dogwood.

And the bird's flesh is believed to prove poisonous to the human stomach at such contingencies, although to the bird the berries seem innocuous!

Many of the large horned Owls trapped in winter, are infested with swarms of winged ticks, about the size of the domestic house fly.

This at a season when the owl is supposed to pass the most of their time in hollows of large decaying trees, where rotten wood is one of their main encamping substance.

By the rodent mice depredations, we learn to have more toleration for the Raptores birds, and for