

The Rockwood Review

THE YEAR'S DECLINE.

We here have begun to experience of the usual Autumnal gales, shaking down many of the rich tinted leaves of the forest trees, and the flocks of Blue Jays in their raids on the abundant harvest of beech and hickory nuts, scream shrill and sympathetically with the rustling agitation in the sylvan environment; the Jays as well as the crow tribe are more clamorous at this season than at any other period of the year. The gusty, (occasional) days of this month with lowering skies, seem to excite the assemblages of dark hued feathered intruders, to harsh vociferation in vehement and discordant tones. Some of these convocations resemble a very Babel of corvine eloquence, and important resolves in regard to the tactics of the dark feathered fraternity are made manifest by the flitting of the tumultuous gathering to the fresh fields or pastures new.

The few robin representatives that are still chirping around, regale themselves on the wild grapes and on the fruit of the Virginia ampelopsis, as also as we lately noticed on the fruit of the Moonseed vine. The fruit too of the Wild briar-rose and that of the Gautheria Winterberry, also the "wa hoo" or Euonymus and the Mitchellia (or squawberry) afford in the declining year many gustatory joys to their feathered and to their furry participants; such as the red squirrel, chip-monk and other rodentia. Flocks of doves, too, sometimes side by side, with covies of Quail, are frequent (almost constant) gleaners of the scattered grain on the buckwheat stubble. Warbling vireos and the savannah sparrows were demonstrative during the first two weeks of September and the warmth was such that a few chimney and other swallows returned to their summer haunts, also the Whip-Poor-Wills, which,

with the hirundines had vanished hence at the time of full moon (about 21st) in August, returned and gave their accustomed calls in the solitudes until nearly the end of September, as there was more than normal warmth; the white-throated sparrow is, we believe only seen here "en passant," but nests regularly about Guelph.

We chanced to hear the easily recognized "Pee-Pee-Pebody" notes, in a wayside thicket near Guelph on the evening of last Dominion Day.

Notwithstanding the diminished area of forest about here, the presence of the Raccoon in our corn-fields has been made evident nocturnally this fall and some well grown and sleek coated "puppies" have been captured by several of our boy acquaintances. One of the plantigrades is yet kept as a door yard pet in a kennel with an attachment of several feet of light chain and is said to be as diverting in its antics as a tamed monkey.

One feature of the past summer here has been a greater profusion in the bird genus Thrush, to this district; the veerys, felivox, wood-thrush and also tanagers, have loitered, bred and sung in many of the maple sugar bushes to a more noticeable extent than for five or six years past, and the sweet notes of the wood thrush could be heard as one stood on one's doorstep about sunrise during nearly the whole month of June (there had been abnormal warmth and rainfall soon after the summer songsters arrival.)

The shore larks at present time are conspicuously absent and the same remark would hold true about here for the summer of 1901—a rather unusual state of bird habit.

The warm afternoon caused the garter snake to bask in the bright rays on the dusky roadway and frogs hopped occasionally out of our pathway to the shelter of the bordering herbage.