

The Rockwood Review.

are often to be found pointing a moral, or quaintly adorning some of his natural history notes.

Of modern philosophers and poets perhaps Emerson occupies the chief place in his regard, and he seems to have absorbed much of the high and serene teaching of that great and genial nature into his own living and being. In his habit of almost microscopical observation he is not unlike Thoreau, but not like that solitary and moody philosopher a recluse from human society, and a shunner of his kind. Unlike him also in regard to the accuracy of his observations, which are not less influenced by a poetic fancy, while subjected to a closer analysis and a more accurate scientific judgment, and so of a more real value to the general reader and the student.

The literary style of his writing betrays a more intimate acquaintance with the best authors of the early part of the century than the society and conversation of his contemporaries. It has a quaint diction and literary flavour of its own which is not its least attraction. The greater part of these essays on the fauna and flora and the birds of Ontario are yet unpublished, though some of them have been printed in the transactions of the Hamilton Historical and Natural History Society of which he is a member, and have procured for him an honorable recognition among scientists in England, as the discoverer of several rare and curious native plants hitherto believed to be unknown in Canada.

The completed volume when published, and let us hope it may be soon, cannot fail to be most fascinating reading, and should preserve to future years the name and labors of William Yates, the Canadian farmer and naturalist.

Though chiefly occupied with studies of birds and plants, his investigations and experiments in other branches of science have not been without interesting and valuable results, especially in photo-

graphy. As a matter of fact he was the experimenter who produced the first X ray picture ever seen in Canada, long before the discovery of the new photography, although no one at the time understood the significance and the importance to science of the discovery.

One summer afternoon he was engaged in photographing a scene near a railway track. A violent thunderstorm was approaching, and just before the exposure of the plate several men on a trolley passed by; presumably at the instant a discharge of lightning took place. Afterwards the plate was exposed, and strange to relate a perfect picture of the figures on the trolley was seen in the view which showed clearly through them.

Personally he is well known and much beloved in that part of Ontario where he resides. His conversation is accompanied with a kindly humour and a friendly sincerity and directness which make his own frank delight in an appreciative auditor a kind of contagion, which imbues the listener with some of his enthusiasm, as he narrates in quaint phraseology the toils and triumphs of the explorer in his own especial field.

His keen observant eyes can still smile tolerant of human foibles and weaknesses, and his ruddy English face crowned with its silver locks, is like a sound and well ripened winter pippin, which has gathered its wholesome colour and quality from late autumn sunshine and frosts.

The readers of the REVIEW unite in wishing him many years still of serene philosophical living, observation and study.
