

The Rockwood Review.

A SHORT CHAPTER ON CATS.

A certain institution not far from a city well known in the Province of Ontario, is possessed of many enthusiasts who in the absence of anything better to do, go in for the raising of cats. Now these cats would be all very well in their place, that is if their place could be found, but Thomas and Maria have very broad ideas, and while their presence is not much to be noticed during the day, they are very much in evidence at night. At times the plague of felines becomes such a serious matter, that the edict goes forth that a general clearing out of the cats must occur, and then there is trouble, not only among the pussies, but the owners also, who wax very indignant at the persecution of their pets. However the order is absolute, and pussy must disappear, no matter how it is accomplished. Those who are really fond of the animals, see that other homes are found. One year a tender hearted patient undertook to rid the place, and provide homes for the outraged pussies. Every day for a time he disappeared with a bag containing four or five cats, and returned saying that they were all right and comfortably provided for. When the number had got well into the thirties, the matter was looked into, and it was found that he had deposited the whole collection in the grounds of an estimable lady, living on the outskirts of the city, and at the time she was greatly worried to account for the rapidly increasing family of Tabbies, and no doubt began to wonder if the days of Pharoah had come again. Contrary to the opinion popularly held, and at one time frequently expressed in song, the cats never came back. A season later an enthusiastic young medico had a mania for shooting, and raising a pack of useless hounds, conceived the idea that it would be well to train his bell-voiced dogs "reallive" game, and induced some

one to capture two of the swiftest and wildest of the army of Thomases still to the fore. The fur was taken far out on the frozen lake in a bag, the hounds straining in the leash, struggled for liberty, and at a given signal the bag was emptied, and the two Toms started for shore without delay. They were given a fair start, and then the hounds in full cry leaped in pursuit. The music was glorious, just like we read about in books, but not less remarkable was the change of key when the grand melee took place. The way in which those Thomases went for the dogs was a caution, and people who were on shore, and had no connection with any of the combatants, laughed until they wept. The hounds reached home on record time, the Toms a good second. A year or so later a plague of cats appeared, and when the weather got fine several dozens of them took up their residence in an old stone well, and devoted their evenings to orchestra practice. Of course these pussies had to live, and the birds began to suffer very seriously. It was a difficult matter to capture these gentry, as they were exceedingly wild, however a box trap was set, and the harvest appeared very quickly. The executioner was a well known local celebrity, who had the business down to a certainty, so that it was absolutely devoid of cruelty. The pussies were bagged and then inspected one by one. The trappers secured two prizes one evening, and they were bagged together. One a huge fellow was immediately recognized as the contra bass of the orchestra, and as he had a habit of playing out of tune, was regarded as a particularly lucky find. It so happened that the bag was left where the owner of the "contra basso" came occasionally, and as his master passed, Thomas recognized him and commenced to purr. He was of course rescued at once, and "Columbine," the owner, chuckled to himself as he substi-