

LETTERS.

HATCHLEY.

February 1st, 1895.

RAMBLING NOTES.

The cat and dog misunderstanding has been cleared up: temporarily at least, and Nipper, and his erstwhile victim, now enjoy in close contiguity, the warmth of the same hearthstone. How long the armistice will last, the history of the future must disclose. Probably the Arctic weather, that has lately been prevalent, forced conviction that the cosiness of a position under the kitchen stove could only be partaken of on mutual terms of peace and amity, and the former contestants now eat from the same platter in seeming oblivion of recent battles, and the merciless tooth and nail warfare of the estrangement "L'Empire est Pace."

Yet to keep the tomahawk from rusting, Nipper has hunted up an opponent more worthy of his mettlesome disposition than his former nimble and ever retreating feline rival; and now on his regular morning journeys to the woods, with his master and the team, he has a breathless "neck or nothing" race, and sundry rough and tumble "wrestlings" in the snow, with a sportive neighbor's dog, on the highway. It is an exciting race, to end in a pantomimic sham battle, where the froth and fur, and make-believe fury, are dispensed freely, and make as diverting a quarter of an hour, as any zealous frequenter of the prize ring could desire to witness.

My son, noticing many indications about the stooks in our corn field, in the month of October, that there were frequent nocturnal visitants from the adjoining bush, (raccoon-mink, and nephitic foot-prints being numerous on the soft sandy soil), set a steel trap or two on the line of march, by a ditch

side. Soon there were disappointing results. A red Squirrel had apparently got into trouble, but had vanished all but one hind foot. The supposition was that the rodent had regained its liberty at the price of the limb, and the trap was re-set with a speedy repetition of a nearly similar incident, the only variation being that two paws of the amputated sciurus were this time left between the jaws of the cruel trap! But the presence of a slight "skift," or skimming of snow on the ground, early in the morning, served to completely unravel the mystery of the victim's removal from the trap captivity, to a more abhorrent "durance vile," in the maw of a sanguinary weasel! There was the trail on the snow, showing the seizure and scuffle, and secondly the dragging by "the scruff of the neck," of the unfortunate rodent, to a den in the hollow of a decaying log, (at the edge of the near-by woods, of the murderous Weasel family.

Nipper's co operation was called on, and by dint of a little hacking and digging, and tactful manoeuvring on the part of dog and proprietor, the Weasel's Sebastopol was stormed, and its Stoatish occupant sacrificed.

The relentless, jerking, way that the luckless Squirrel had been dragged by its captor, was evident, by the "zig-zag," and slightly blood-stained route, along the snow white-ened ground.

The white skin of the "Putores Erminea," with black-tipped tail, is now stretched on a shingle, in the limbo of a garret that we wot of.

A week or two after the above escapade, a dead Gull was found, on the bank of a small rivulet, that runs through one of our meadows. This we think was the black backed Gull, "(Larus Maribus.)" These birds occasionally penetrate thus far inland; they are said to come up the Grand River from Lake Erie,