

The Rockwood Review.

SEASONAL COMMENTS IN BURFORD TOWNSHIP.

The October and November season brought out many interesting displays of the Tipular gnat gyrations. Our children noticed them and spoke to their elders about the curious phenomenon.

The gnats come out mostly in calm sunny afternoons, and sportively swarm to the number of a hundred or more in each group, three to four feet above the surface of the grassy town.

The movements indicate gayety and exhilaration, quite as much so as the activities of a higher order of beings in the mazy intricacies of the ballroom; in the gradual rise of the gnat gyrating party, the curves of flight of the individuals show much uniformity, and although to the sightseers a tangle, there is no collision or confusion, and they seem to have learned the art of "keeping out of one another's way," to perfection: and the simultaneous drop of the entire assemblage to a two feet or so, lower level, is accomplished with promptness and precision—then the uprise part of the programme is again resumed.

The gyrating swarm at a short distance has the appearance of a small whiff of smoke or vapour and despite the small corporeal organization of the gnat tribe of insects they possess the element of permanency the texture of things to an equal extent with the growing grass or with the running streams and seem to survive the blizzards of winter and the scorching summer heats with the aid of the mould microbes and shelter of grass and weed foliages about fences and shade trees and their range of habitat extends through all temperate climes.

A neighbour complained that putorius vison had paid a midnight visit to his poultry coop, and fatally

bitten TEN of his Hamburg fowls he, next night set several traps around the scene of slaughter of the previous night, but to no purpose, and on narrating the circumstance to an acquaintance the latter announced his belief that the four legged prowler was still about the building, and sure enough, on taking off some of the boards of a double partition the sanguinary thief was ousted from the side of a dead hen that he had managed to forcibly drag into the vacant space the house dog being one of the spectators of "the breaking cover" soon put the final act to the scenic performance;—near a small rivulet on the same farm several weeks ago, some ducks and even a goose or two were victimized, a trap was set near a planked culvert that was supposed to afford harbourment to the verminous slayer or slayers, and sure enough, a two pound weight mink was in the steely embrace the next morning, but from suspicious impressions on the muddy margin of the rivulet the presence of another putorius was rendered certain, so the trap being moved to the opposite side of the bridging place, the following morning revealed a mink's toe nail in the relentless jaws of the trap, this was re-set for a time, but just under the surface of the water with some chicken entrails pegged down in the water, near by as a bait, and during next night, Mr. Mink got caught in the decoy, and daybreak was found drowned as a result of desperate struggles for liberation. The fine mink skins are thought to be worth two dollars each. All three were males.

About the sixth of November numerous flocks of wild ducks were seen about here, mostly flying in a southeasterly direction—the curving and wavering line of there formative group is in incessant change when in flight overland; quite different from the arrow-head phalanx of flocks of wild geese in transitu. The ducks were plainly of the species known as Whistle Wings.